INDIA'S STRATEGIC PRACTICE:
A CASE STUDY OF MUGHAL GRAND STRATEGY, 1556-1605

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JAYASHREE VIVEKANANDAN

International Politics Division
Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament
School of International Studies
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi 110067

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "India's Strategic Practice: A Case Study of Mughal Grand Strategy, 1556-1605" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Jayashree

JAYASHREE VIVEKANANDAN

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROF. C.S.R. MURTHY
Chairperson, CIPOD

Chairperson
Centre for International Politics,
Organization & Disarmament
School of International Studies
J.N.U., New Delhi

DR. RAJESH RAJAGOPALAN
Supervisor

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA - Abul Fazl (1927-49), *The Ain-i Akbari*, D.C. Phillott and J. Sarkar (eds.), Translated by H. Blochmann and H.S. Jarrett, three volumes, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, reprinted 1989.

AAl - Hamid al-Din Khan Bahadur (1963), *Anecdotes of Aurangzib* (*Akkam-i Alamgir*), Translated by J. Sarkar, Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar.

AN- Abul Fazl (1902-39), *The Akbarnama*, Translated by H. Beveridge, three volumes, Delhi: Rare Books, reprinted 1993.

BN - Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur (2006), *Babur Nama: Journal of Emperor Babur*, Dilip Hero (abridged and edited), Translated by A.S. Beveridge, first published in 1922, New Delhi: Penguin.

IOLR - India Office Library Records, British Library.

MT - Al-Badaoni (1898), *Muntakhabu-T-Tawarikh*, Translated by George Ranking, vol. 1, Patna: Academica Asiatica, reprinted 1973.

TJ - Nur al-Din Jahangir (1909-14), *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri or Memoirs of Jahangir*, H. Beveridge (ed.), Translated by Alexander Rogers, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, reprinted 1989.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIA'S STRATEGIC PRACTICE: THEORY MEETS HISTORY

The perceived incompatibility between the fields of IR and history rests on the assumption that there exists an irreconcilable divide between the theory and the narrative. Different intellectual traditions have fostered divergent approaches even though the subject under focus may be the same. Although differences exist, which is why they have evolved into distinct fields, these have been exaggerated to the extent that the possibility of complimentarity appears absurd to many scholars in both areas. As the introductory chapter demonstrated, the lack of a sustained engagement between disciplines has engendered stereotypical representations that have served to further entrench ill-informed opinions about other disciplines. IR's isolationist tendency has only compounded the problem that affects other disciplines to a somewhat lesser extent. In many ways, the theorist's call for interdisciplinarity ought to be the most vociferous of all, given that her claim to scholarship lies in her ability to present a comprehensive picture.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between the two mutually wary disciplines of IR and history. The exercise would afford us the opportunity to look at the manner in which IR academics have engaged with issues of historicity and contingency, and the impact such engagements (or their lack) have had on the state of the discipline. Finally, it would specifically locate this interface within the context of India, arguing that cultural interpretations of India's strategic practice do not necessarily translate into greater sensitivity towards historical specificities. The apparent engagement with history has only gone on to further reinforce orientalist caricatures that have long outlived their colonial contexts. In a series of negations that this chapter will undertake, it is hoped that a more nuanced and historically contingent interpretation of India's strategic practice would emerge.

IR THEORY AND HISTORY: STRANGE BEDFELLOWS OR DISCIPLINARY PARTNERS?

The incorporation of history into the study of international politics developed into an influential intellectual tradition that highlighted the importance of subjectivity and

context, as against the general sense of disengagement that the association with the natural sciences had brought to IR. (Hollis and Smith 2003: 3) The state of the discipline was not the same everywhere, and the fact that international history emerged in Britain after the First World War and not in the US, where the discipline of IR took root, partially accounted for the divergent trajectories the discipline charted in the two countries.[36]

There are several points of divergence cited by theorists and historians as to why their respective fields cannot benefit from the other. The idiographic-nomothetic distinction is seen by many as the basic cause of disjunct between the two fields. The parsimony of theory contrasts with the richness of history. There is a marked difference in the manner in which the historian and the social scientist approach their respective subjects. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita points out that while

> '...the social scientist is more likely to emphasise general explanations of social phenomena...the historian is more likely to emphasise particularistic, unique features of individual episodes of social phenomena'. (Mesquita 1996: 52-53; see also Gaddis 1990: 423)

The historian is ever mindful of particularities that inform her explanation of specific episodes in history, preferring 'explanatory tents to temples.' (Gaddis 1997: 81) On the other hand, the social scientist regards these very particularities as variables within a larger theoretical framework, and her research interest lies in seeking to establish the correlation between them. (Levy 1997: 23; Ingram 1997: 63) Thus, the task that the social scientist sets herself,

> '...is not so much to explain particular events, but to identify relations among critical variables that explain classes of events or phenomena...The historian is more likely to be concerned with giving meaning to events rather than defining the relations among variables...Historians emphasise discourse, meaning, context, and complexity-internal validity...Social scientists tend to emphasise regularities, replication, and parsimony-external validity.' (Mesquita 2002: 13)

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[36] That international history originated in Britain and not in US was not a coincidental development. Rigid compartmentalisation in US did not allow diplomatic historians to explore other fields, whereas in Europe the absence of exclusive areas of specialisation allowed for productive cross-fertilisation between fields. (Hecht and Schumacher 2003: 6) While British IR tends to be mindful of Western philosophical content, the US school is more universalist. Yew notes that 'Though distinct, they both collaboratively ensure that particularism and universalism are two sides of the coin of western domination'. (Yew 2003: 11)

The theorist's imperative to abstract from the complex reality and distil neat mono-causal explanations clashes with the avowed aim of the historian to reveal the descriptive detail through multicausal accounts.

Although actual differences in goals, methodology and strategies separate the two fields of IR and history, they cause misinterpretations when understood in absolute terms. Historians do not rely entirely on narrative, indeed they cannot. Preston King clarifies that '...it makes little sense to think of it [history] as consisting exclusively of 'unique' events, since exclusively unique events are unknowable.' (King 2000: 19) When they attempt to faithfully describe and reconstruct a sequence of events, historians are in effect attempting to establish certain causal relations. Diplomatic historians very often prefer to thematise their data rather than simply periodise it. Some of the most notable works in diplomatic history have offered new insights into the working of IR.[37]

Likewise, many IR theorists have sought to bridge the gap between IR theory and history. Long before interdisciplinary research sparked a renewed interest in history, IR scholars had sought to make their theorisations historically contingent and open-ended rather than timeless and static. Carr, a classical realist, steered clear of ahistoricism in his analysis of the inter-war period. The permanence of power did not determine the course of history, and Carr regarded the state system that formed the very basis of his study as nothing but the product of circumstances. He argued that, 'few things are permanent in history, and it would be rash to think that the territorial unit of power is one of them'. (Carr 1946: 229) Carr's firm belief in the role of historical contingency and subjectivity in theoretical formulations is evident from his assertion that,

> 'The political process does not consist, as the realist believes, purely in a succession of phenomena governed by mechanical laws of causation; nor does it consist, as the utopian believes, purely in the application to practice of certain theoretical truths evolved out of their inner consciousness by wise and far-seeing people. Political science must be based on recognition of the interdependence of

[37] Among scholars who straddle the fields of IR and diplomatic history with commendable ease include Paul Kennedy and Paul Schroeder. Schroeder argues that differences between the two fields are negotiable, for which 'the sign... [he is] trying to post on historical terrain for political scientists is not "Keep Off-Private Property"...but rather "Thin Ice".' (Schroeder 1997: 72) Understandably, for the sure-footed political scientist comfortable with abstractions, the open-endedness of contingent explanations that the terrain of history represents could well be treacherous. For more on the role of theory in history, see Jack Levy 2001: 73-74.

theory and practice, which can be attained only through a combination of utopia and reality'. (Carr 1946: 13)

In *What is History?*, the entangling of facts and values is further highlighted by Carr.

> 'Somewhere between these two poles- the north pole of valueless facts and the south pole of value judgements still struggling to transform themselves into facts- lies the realm of historical truth. The historian...is balanced between fact and interpretation, between fact and value. He cannot separate them.' (Carr 1987: 132)

Similarly, Morgenthau argued that theory is applicable only to particular historical and cultural contexts, devoid of which it holds no eternal wisdom that is valid down history. He further clarified that realism

> 'does not endow its key concepts of interest defined as power with a meaning that is fixed once and for all....The kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated.'[38] (Morgenthau 1967: 8-9)

The respect for history and its place in IR theory was evident in the works of scholars belonging to the British Committee such as Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and Adam Watson who were concerned with studying the historical origins of international politics.[39] (Wight 1977; Butterfield and Wight 1966; Bull 1977) One of the objectives of the Committee was 'to make past history continuous with present experience, and to see how far the more long-term views or surveys of the historian might affect one's appreciation of the present day.' (Cited in Vigezzi 2005: 53) Asserting the need for greater historical content in IR, Bull and Watson argued,

> 'We certainly hold that our subject can be understood only in historical perspective, and that without an awareness of the past that generated it, the universal international society of the present can have no meaning.' (Cited in Vigezzi 2005: 1)

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[38] Morgenthau rejects the positivist contention of science as a value neutral and objective branch of knowledge. For more on the contrasting roles of the theorist within classical realist and positivist approaches, see Bain 2000: 454-457

[39] The British Committee for the Theory of International Politics (1954-85) - under Butterfield and its three coordinators Wight, Watson and Bull - was an eclectic group of fifty members drawn from diverse backgrounds, like historians, journalists, theologians and jurists. The realist orientation underlying the approach of the Committee was evident in Butterfield's opposition to the idealism surrounding the League of Nations. (Vigezzi 2005: v-vii, 19)

Wight's emphasis on the centrality of history and theory within IR is underlined in the homology he devised, according to which politics is to international politics, as political theory is to historical interpretation.[40]

Although history was located at the centre of its deliberations, the Committee was undecided on whether to focus on its general trends or to be more mindful of its particular trajectories. What is worth noting is that there were no perceived incongruities between historical contingency and the notion of continuity. Despite the fact that the Committee was concerned with the various state systems that existed down history, its realist orientation did not prevent the members from arguing that a strict differentiation between the international system and international society was not feasible. The system was believed to be operating on a particular set of rules, whereas the society added the richness of social interactions amongst states to this bare setup. The two concepts were not perceived to be antithetical to each other, having developed alongside in history.[41] (Vigezzi 2005: 5-10)

The works of the British Committee members, such as Butterfield and Wight's *Diplomatic Investigations* and Bull's *Anarchical Society*, became the basis for further theoretical enquiries by the English School. Robert Jackson defined the English School as

> 'a variety of theoretical inquiries which conceive of IR as a world not merely of power or prudence or wealth or capability or domination but also one of recognition, association, membership, equality, equity... the normative vocabulary of human conduct.' (Jackson 2000: 271)

The English School is today seen as the via media between realism and idealism. Its core concern of the international society draws upon both the anarchical features of the

[40] Cynthia Weber argues that Wight's homology was not intended to restrict the ambit of international theory to diplomatic history alone. In asserting the international theory was anything but a well defined field, Wight sought to interpret its frontiers as a constantly changing construction rather than a pre-ordained representation. (Weber 1998: 466)

[41] The difference between the norm-based international society and the rule-governed international system is played out in the writings of Bull and Waltz. For Bull, balance of power vitally depended on self-restraint on part of the states that desired it for its order maintenance. Waltz, on the other hand, attached no such normative significance to it, arguing instead that the balance of power was the objective outcome of the calculus of anarchy, and hence had little to do with the self-restraint of states. (Albert and Hilkermeier 2004: 62)

international system as well as cooperative elements of world government.[42] (Buzan 2001; Hurrell 2001) So far, the main thrust of the School has been to uncover the nature and function of international societies and to trace their histories and development. (Buzan 2004: 10; Little 2003: 458-459) Indeed, classical realists with their emphasis on norms and values bore greater affinity to early English School writers like Bull, than to neorealists who were greatly influenced by rational choice theory. As Albert and Hilkermeier note, the 'English School becomes a way of preserving the classical heritage of IR from the ravages of rational choice theory.'[43] (Albert and Hilkermeier 2004: 61)

IR theory began to drift away from its historical moorings with the advent of policy realism. Policy oriented realists such as Morgenthau and Kennan preferred, as Jack Levy puts it, to 'use' history rather than 'learn' from it, by limiting its scope in theory to illustrations and anecdotes. It was deduced that distancing itself from history would insulate IR theory from the vagaries of historical process and be conducive to abstraction.[44] The contrast with the English school is evident from Morgenthau's assertion that 'politics was governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature'. (Morgenthau 1948: 4) On balance, whereas the classical realists fared better than the structural realists with their 'first image' analysis, they were more deterministic that their English school counterparts, who infused greater historical content into their theoretical studies.

Thus, countering the importance of history has been a strong strain of policy relevance that has today come to define the objectives and the agenda of IR. The field of IR, split between scholars engaged in policy relevant research and others pursuing

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[42] Buzan identifies two core features of the English School- the three concepts of international system, international society and world society; and its pluralist approach. International society is about institutionalisation of shared interests and identity amongst states and puts the creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions at the centre of IR theory. (Buzan 2004: 6-7)

[43] Christian Reus-Smit's exploration into the affinities and differences between the English School and constructivism that highlights their internal diversity and contestations is instructive. For more on the axes of internal debate within the two schools, see Reus-Smit 2002.

[44] Intellectually, the US showed a pronounced tilt towards empiricism and the application of the scientific method- a proclivity that went on to stimulate not just the field of IR but the rest of the social sciences as well. The touting of economics as a true science prompted political science to emulate it in a similar pursuit of scientific rigour. These had repercussions on its specialised branch of study of international politics, for political science was regarded as 'the mother or stepmother of international relations'. (Hoffmann 1977: 46)

theoretical concerns, is marked by the singular absence of internal dialogue.[45] (Haber *et al.* 1997: 34) Excessive concern with contemporary affairs has made IR scholarship reactive, leading Christopher Hill to lament that

> '...there is good reason for the historian to say that international relations is a subject essentially concerned with the period for which the archives are not yet open, and that our task is to write (as Peter Hennessey says) 'the first draft of history'.' (Hill 1994: 9)

His call for IR scholars to 'resist the siren song of policy relevance' is echoed by Steve Smith who warns that '[d]ismissing work as being irrelevant to policy choices ... [has become] a powerful disciplining device.' (Smith 2003: 142; Hill and Beshoff 1994: 21; George 1997: 51) Given IR's policy orientation that informs much of its research output on contemporary affairs, it is imperative to reclaim the discipline's forgotten association with history. The following section takes a long view of the dynamics between the two disciplines and the prospects for further engagement.

'Multiple races and many finish lines'[46]: Towards a non-linear view of history

For a field that has long been charged with nurturing a historically impoverished view of the world, IR theory has done little to address the lacuna. Mainstream theories such as neorealism have shown little respect for premodern history, although the roots of realism can be traced to philosophers such as Thucydides and Machiavelli.[47] (Elman and Elman 1997: 9) Liberalism has been no less oblivious of the significance of history to theory. Despite a professed scholarly interest in the role of non-state entities in international politics, it has failed to explore the range of political organisations that existed prior to, and in many instances, existed alongside the modern state system. It is evident that within their respective theoretical confines, each theory has mined history for instances that

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[45] The disconnect is most visible in policy circles in which policy makers have tended to gravitate towards either the sequential frame of reference that historians espouse or the systemic understanding that political scientists follow, rarely employing both in tandem. (Gaddis 1987: 20)

[46] Rudolph 1987: 732.

[47] Rudolph argues that the temporal divides that render Western history intelligible make little sense when applied to the Asian context. No drastic changes of comparable proportions appear to have taken place in the region around 1500, after which the modern period is believed to have commenced in Europe. Consequently, the time periods in the Asian context would be longer if changes across time are to be recorded. (Rudolph 1987: 733)

validate its claims. Given that a historical understanding of international political thought would reveal the different types of political orders that existed in the past, it would help, as Edward Keene argues, to

> '...illuminate what is different about the specific kind of international order in which we live today. A continuist approach will inevitably fail in this endeavour because it is dedicated to the...goal of eliding differences in languages, vocabulary and historical context so as to make concepts and theories comparable across time...'. (Keene 2005: 18)

The quest for historical cases has been driven by the search for similarities between previous political orders and the present state system. Quentin Skinner cautions that to 'demand from the history of thought a solution to our own immediate problems is to commit not merely a methodological fallacy but something like a moral error.' (Skinner 2002: 89)

The key concept that has ensured a 'continuist approach' within IR is that of the 'tradition' which stretches back to the ancient period. According to John Gunnell, 'The 'tradition' is a retrospective analytical construction which produces a rationalized version of the past'. (Gunnell 1978: 132) The notion of the 'great tradition' from ancient Greece to contemporary times, which Gunnell refers to as 'a piece of academic folklore', is most prevalent in political theory, spin-offs from which are evident in IR theory as well. (Gunnell 1978: 133) The idea that ancient Greece was the wellspring of European political thought is a relatively recent construction that unseated the earlier formulation of the Ancient Model in the early nineteenth century.[48] The impetus for the shift came from the Romanticists who privileged the particular and the local over the general and the universal that Enlightenment stood for. Ancient Greece came to be seen as the repository of Europe's childhood when unhindered imagination and purity were at play.[49] Bernal notes that over the centuries,

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[48] The Ancient Model projected ancient Greece as an amalgam of different cultural influences, particularly of the Egyptians and the Phoenicians who colonised the primitive tribes and introduced progressive practices such as literacy and irrigation. However, the influence of the Romantics ensured that this phase of colonisations of ancient Greece was downplayed. As a result, the Greeks were no longer seen as recipients of cultural attributes from the East but were now portrayed as the progenitors of civilisation itself. There was a sudden spurt of interest in all aspects of Greek culture: art, poetry, and particularly philosophy, which historians in the 1780s concurred, was the beginning all philosophical thought. (Bernal 1994: 122)

[49] Ironically, till Renaissance the notion of 'childhood' carried derogatory connotations of cultural superficiality, evident in Plato's references to Egyptian priests deriding Greeks as children. In mid-

> 'Ancient Greece has served two functions. It is seen as the first universal civilization and at the same time as the cultural ancestor of the Europeans. This gives Europe a universal character as the continent that is not merely the vanguard of world progress but is the essence of the world itself.' (Bernal 1994: 127)

In international politics, Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes are arrayed to form a formidable phalanx of thinkers, constituting a grand tradition to which later writers such as Carr and Morgenthau contributed. In the retrospective positioning of philosophers in an exalted lineage of international politics, the subtle point often missed is that the classical thinkers focussed mainly on what is today construed as internal politics. (Schmidt 1994: 353-56; Walker 1995: 322) As Steven Forde argues,

> 'Though this [classical realism] tradition has been immensely powerful, it is to some extent an artificial construct- these thinkers [such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau] did not by and large think of themselves as adherents to a tradition, but as innovators.' (Cited in Jeffery 2005: 74)

The compulsions behind constructing a grand tradition are rooted in contemporary concerns.[50] Collini *et al.* make the point that in 'writing history backwards', proponents of lineages are more interested in substantiating their own theoretical claims by pointing out its historical antecedents. (Cited in Schmidt 1994: 363) Rejecting the interpretation of intellectual development in terms of linear progress, Dryzek and Leonard offer an alternative approach to the subject of disciplinary history.

> 'Given the historicity of political life, theoretical progress in political science will not be of the "vertical"- or transhistorically successive and successful - kind found in the natural sciences. Instead, our progress can only be a "lateral" accumulation of potentially useful research traditions, each of which is contextually constrained in its problem-solving power.' (Dryzek and Leonard 1988: 1257)

In this regard, Oakeshott's distinction between 'practical' and 'historical' past is a resourceful tool through which the invention of traditions within IR can be understood.[51]

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eighteenth century under the influence of the Romantics, childhood was exalted as a virtuous phase in human life to which the corrupted minds of present-day Europe could look back; and that burden of childhood fell in the lap of ancient Greece. (Bernal 1994: 121)

[50] According to Krygier, a tradition constitutes three elements, namely belief in its historical legacy, an authoritative presence, and its inheritance by succeeding generations rather than the mere discovery from a forgotten past. (Jeffery 1998: 62)

[51] Oakeshott argued that 'wherever the significance of the past lies in the fact that it has been influential in deciding the present and future fortunes of man, whenever the present is sought in the past, and whenever

Viewed in terms of enduring legacies that impart a sense of continuity to the discipline, divergent voices from within are seen as threatening the very foundations of IR.

History as a discipline has had its fair share of self-reflection, although IR in the main has remained relatively unaffected by the debates raging within between 'traditionalist historians' and 'critical historiographers'.[52] Critical historiographers like Alan Munslow and Keith Jenkins criticise the supposedly objective search for the truth, arguing instead that 'history is 'made' by historians rather than discovered through evidence-based methodology.' (Vaughan-Williams 2005: 117-120) The traditionalist penchant of historians such as Arthur Marwick and Lawrence Stone for 'interpretive closures' contrasted with the 'relativist perspective' put forward by the critical historiographers. The works of Derrida and Foucault were influential in shaping the preoccupations of critical historiographers in this regard. Derrida argued that Western political thought was structured around sharp dichotomies that were not neutral projections. Deconstruction questioned such fixities, embracing instead an approach that problematises and dislocates established modes of enquiry. Thus, history can never be permanently sealed off and sanctified in a way that the call for the 'end of history' signified. (Vaughan-Williams 2005: 125-130)

It is evident that history has not been innocent to the dynamics of power, furnishing intellectual justifications for the rise of the West vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Historical scholarship, termed as 'the intellectual artefact' of the nation-state, predictably espoused the nation-state as the unit of analysis, apart from privileging European history as the primary reference point in the construction of world history.[53] (Bentley 2006: 20)

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the past is regarded as merely a refuge from the present- the past involved is a practical, and not an historical past.' (Cited in Jeffery 1998: 67) The historical past had to be created through 'a process of translation' rather than through re-enactment as Collingwood would have preferred it. (Jeffery 1998: 68)

[52] Alan Munslow spelt out the six central principles on which the traditional approach hinged- Past is considered 'real' and 'truth' relates to reality through referentiality and inference, 'facts' derived from evidence are *a priori* distinct from interpretation, 'fact' and 'value' are clearly separable, 'history' and 'fiction' can and must be differentiated, the knower is removed from what is known, and 'truth' is not perspectival. (Cited in Vaughan-Williams 2005: 119)

[53] Sankaran Krishna makes a similar point when he argues that the 'powerful coalescence of scientific rationality, an interstate system hierarchized on the principles of social Darwinism, the belief that territory and identity must somehow be aligned, and the modulation of history into a script that demands replication has eviscerated our imaginations of all but the nation.' (Krishna 1999: 230)

James Blaut argues that the history of human progress is explained in terms of the diffusion of inventions from the dynamic Europe to the static non-western world. The proponents of this view, whom he terms as the diffusionists, viewed the world as binary opposites that comprised of a progressive Europe and the peripheral non-Europe, leading to the development of 'tunnel history'. Tunnel history, which privileged events in Europe to explain world history, was merged with diffusionism to explain the outward spread of progressive European elements to stagnant societies through colonialism.[54] Moreover, comparative history went on to highlight the disparities between the two worlds, which as Subrahmanyam puts it, began by accepting that 'the dynamic of world history is the dynamic of European history.' (Subrahmanyam 1993: 145; McNiven and Russell 2005: 141; Blaut 2000: 7) Rudolph notes,

> 'Most of the great practitioners of huge comparisons, among them Hegel, Marx, and Weber, have understood Asian social, economic, and political systems as flawed or degraded performances in a historical race in which all competitors run toward the same finish line- whether the finish line is nation-state, bourgeois capitalism, or universal rationalization.' (Rudolph 1987: 732)

A more accommodative IR theory could incorporate the writings of eighteenth century thinkers like Denis Diderot, who although Eurocentric in his approach, was nonetheless opposed to studying the European state system at the exclusion of the political systems that existed in the rest of the world. (Keene 2005: 9) Pandey articulates the postcolonial critique of history's exclusionist agenda.

> 'To take account...different kinds of articulations of the past [other than the nation-state] is to open up the area of historical enquiry: to accommodate the malleable, contextual, fuzzy, 'lived' community...and to recognize how the community (the subject of history) is forged in the very construction of the past- in the course, one might say, of a historical discourse.' (Pandey 1999: 49)

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[54] According to Blaut, classical Eurocentric diffusionism was grounded on five fundamental propositions-
1 Progressive cultural evolution in Greater Europe is self-generated, autonomous, natural and continuous.
2 Progressive evolution results from European rationality and is source of all European progress.
3 Non-European societies do not change due to internal causes, but from diffusion.
4 Main form of interaction between Europe and non-Europe is outward diffusion of progressive innovations.
5 Natural consequence of this diffusion is the flow of wealth into Europe, a sort of partial repayment for Europe's gift of civilisation. (Blaut 2000: 7)

Western influence on IR is unmistakable, and a reliable indicator of its dominance is the discipline's research output. For instance, despite the increased focus on cross-regional and international subjects in general, journal articles with a regional focus were twice as likely to study Western Europe as Asia-Pacific. (Breuning *et al.* 2005: 456) Moreover, majority of the contributors hailed from a US-based institution, a dominance that even the combined strength of countries classified as the 'periphery of the core' such as the UK, Australia and Canada failed to challenge. It goes without saying that contributions from the 'core of the periphery' (China, Russia and Brazil, for example) and the 'periphery', as far as the prominent journals are concerned, are dismally negligible.[55] The voices from the margins are few, and even fewer participate in the conversation that shapes the language and terms of debate within IR. Ironically, the call for greater sensitivity towards historical particularities and the rejection of Eurocentrism only goes on to further highlight Western dominance on the discipline. (Elman and Elman 2001; Monkonnen 1994)

However, differences between the fields of IR and history have narrowed in recent years, with IR theorists becoming more mindful of complexity and contingency in their case studies.[56] As Robert Gilpin points out, 'believing that the past is not merely prologue and that the present does not have a monopoly on the truth, we have drawn on historical experience.' (Gilpin 1981: 11) Beier and Arnold make a similar call to rescue IR from disciplinary orthodoxy, arguing that '... we must do more than simply forsake the discipline; we must strive to become undisciplined.' (Beier and Arnold 2005: 58) Friedrich Kratochwil points the way forward in making the orientation towards history more meaningful. He regards a historical fact as significant for its '*emplotment in a narrative*', in relation to other such facts. 'Emplotment' of facts highlights the point that 'although history is past and seems therefore objective [and] fixed...actual historical reflection shows that...history is malleable because it is always *remembered* and part of a

[55] The data is drawn from a study that focuses on the research output of top three prominent US-based academic journals (*International Studies Quarterly, World Politics* and *International Organization*) over a period of ten volume years (1995-2004). The criteria of comparative rankings, among other counts, are also based on previous studies on research output in major journals. (Breuning *et al.* 2005)

[56] Some of the theorists who have sought to bring greater historical depth to their studies include Buzan and Little 2000; Watson 1992; Alexander Wendt 1999; and Hobden and Hobson 2002.

story'. (Kratochwil 2006: 14, emphasis original) The act of recollecting the past is in itself an empowering experience that goes beyond making people mere repositories of an exalted tradition. History then becomes an 'encounter with the self' that reminds people of their sense of agency (of what they can potentially do) and their sense of identity (of who they are and where they came from). It is no coincidence that historically, renaissances and revolutions have forged deep ties with the past and drawn sustenance from history.[57] (Kratochwil 2006: 15)

Paradoxically, increased historical content in IR literature has not always answered the charge of ahistoricism within the field. As Hill argues, the conflation of the history of IR and that of the sovereign state tends to focus on the developments of the West during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Hill 2006) Periods which witnessed the dominance of anarchy are studied for their similarity to the present international system. Consequently, certain periods of history such as the ancient Greek era are often studied for their apparent commonalities to the present order, whereas entire historical periods and continents are glossed over for being 'remote and alien' to the contemporary context. (Buzan and Little 2000: 2) A fixation with presentism and eternal concerns is to Stephanie Lawson, one of 'the crimes of anachronism' that IR theorists end up committing.[58] (Lawson 2006: 41) IR's engagement with history is informed by the traditional approach that seeks to uncover historical truth through objective means, and it is this perpetual search for objectivity that Nietzsche was critical of. He regarded 'suprahistorical perspective' as

> 'a history whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself...a history whose perspective on all that precedes it implies the end of time, a completed development.' (Cited in Drolet 2004: 78)

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[57] The tendency to turn to history in search of lessons is an old one. Victorian literature reveals the preoccupation of a number of writers such as Carlyle and Walter Scott who turned to the Middle Ages for solution to the excesses of the Industrial Revolution such as rampant squalor, unemployment and congested towns. Medievalism idealised the past, when such degenerate conditions were absent and despite its nostalgia, it was a pragmatic approach that turned its back on the spirit of the modern man. (Chapman 1986: 38)

[58] However, presentism is not a bane that dogs IR theorists alone. Historians have also tended to organise and align historical data as a response to concerns that they perceive in the present. This was particularly true of diplomatic histories written during the Cold War period. (Gaddis 1987: 12)

Openness as the means to recover historicity rather than arriving at fixed interpretations signifies the 'problem of history' that IR would find instructive to contend with. (Vaughan-Williams 2005: 136) Nowhere is this 'problem of history' more evident than in the treatment of postcolonial societies such as India within IR.

Shunning the 'suprahistorical perspective' must then begin with a rethink on applying notions with Western connotations to non-Western contexts. Rudolph asserts that the European and Asian polities differed vastly in terms of sheer scale. The European polities approximated regional kingdoms that were territorially compact, providing conditions conducive to the growth of associated notions of monopoly over force, unified sovereignty and a national identity. It is then of little surprise that the nation and the state fused within European political thought. On the other hand, Asian polities, which she describes as 'transethnic empires', straddled vast tracts of land of continental proportions. (Rudolph 87: 736) Imperial control extended over multiethnic populations, which were often held together by some form of loose hegemony.[59] As Pradeep Barua notes,

> '...there developed in India a concept of sovereignty that emphasized the multiple rights of different groups and sectors in society and not the existence of a unitary concept of the state.' (Barua 2005: 21-22)

To attempt fitting this disparate state of affairs within the neat categorisation of a cohesive nation-state would be a contorted depiction of history. (Rudolph 1987: 736)

What explains IR theory's fixation with similarity and its unease with difference? The answer lies in the positivist influence which is most marked in the field's search for unchanging laws that dictate and explain all phenomena and state behaviour. The formulation and testing of such immutable laws of IR require consistent and invariant patterns that would be subject to generalisations. Predictably, orders radically different from the espoused system did not fit into such explanatory schemes and over time, the factor of contingency gave way to a trans-historical interpretation of IR. Divorced from the varied reality that history epitomises, mainstream theories developed several

[59] Rudolph's position was in line with Burton Stein's who argued that social control in India was left to self-regulating kinship, religious and territorial institutions that formed the network of alliances on which the king's power was based. 'The Indian king was an overlord, not a manager; he demanded submission to his claim of superiority, rather than obedience to his orders; he did not distribute directives over the ruled.' (Stein 1975: 77)

theoretical blind spots. (Buzan and Little 2000: 18-22) For instance, none of the theories is equipped to explain the evolution of the international system, since its existence is simply stated as a given rather than deduced.[60] Theories which assume that the modern international system came into being in 1648 at Westphalia commit the conceptual fallacy of treating the notion of the international system and its Westphalian model as one and the same. References to history, if at all, are confined to European origins of the international system, thereby mistaking the model for the concept itself. (Buzan and Little 2001: 24-28)

A related assumption that has largely remained unquestioned is the anarchical nature of IR. Realists base their entire calculation of rationalistic state behaviour on the assumption that an international system cannot be anything but anarchical. Similarly, liberals too take anarchy to be the starting point of their study of peace and war. However, the principle betrays a singular lack of historical depth. Adam Watson argues that dichotomous notions of absolute anarchy and hierarchy are extreme scenarios that exist only at the theoretical level. Rather, a more nuanced understanding would indicate a spectrum of systems within which all historical and contemporary international systems would fall. Since a spectrum allows for varying permutations of control and autonomy, it offers an appropriate framework to trace the evolution of a particular system and is thus open-ended in its possibilities. (Watson 1992: 4)

Having made a case for an interdisciplinary approach that bridges the gap between the subfields of realism and constructivism on one front, and between the fields of IR and history on the other, this study seeks to capitalise on the benefits of such an endeavour. If history matters and so do the contingent forms that political units may take from time to time, then the study of empires in the time span of a country's evolving strategic practice is both logical and necessary. The emphasis on the sovereign state system marginalised one of the most enduring political systems in history from the discourse on international politics: empires. The study of imperial systems would make the history of IR more representative and balanced. This study extends the agenda set by

[60] Andreas Osiander contests the conventional view that the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 marked a neat break with the past, arguing that the advent of industrialisation marked a far more radical transition in terms of the integration of economic networks it entailed and the political means that were devised to administer them. (Osiander 2001: 281)

Doyle and others who have sought to rectify the imbalance in IR studies caused by presentism and Eurocentrism, to explore an understudied domain- that of India's strategic practice.

APPLYING IR THEORY TO INDIAN HISTORY

Frederick Turner's observation that 'Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time' sums up the scholarship on India's strategic practice and the course it has taken over the decades. (Cited in Elman and Elman 2001: 62) Indigenous writings on statecraft and diplomacy date back to ancient India when Kautilya strategised and theorisations kept pace with the changing times. In the medieval period, the Islamic theory of state was incorporated to yield yet another exposition of India's strategic practice, one that placed the state squarely within a heterogeneous society.

Notwithstanding the sustained interest of ancient and medieval historians and theoreticians in matters concerning strategic practice, it is the later writings by Europeans that left an indelible impact on the manner in which India came to be subsequently studied in the initial context. Theorisations on India's strategic practice emerged primarily during the colonial period when systematic study of a hitherto 'unknown' country was undertaken. Indology and its attendant variants were intrinsically linked to the colonial project and hence emerged as an organised body of knowledge covering areas ranging from religion to language. Given its multi-faceted nature, colonialism is a truly interdisciplinary phenomenon spanning fields as diverse as geography, psychiatry, anthropology and history. Thus no particular discipline, howsoever rigorous and comprehensive it may be in its approach, can hope to study colonialism in isolation from other fields of enquiry. (Hall 2000: 24)

The rationale behind selecting the colonial period as the starting point of our analysis of India's strategic practice is not all that straightforward. The colonial writings represented myriad voices within, articulating divergent perspectives on the land and the people the British ruled. (Teltscher 1995: 2-5) Epitomising the internal pulls and contradictions that marked colonial rule over India, the writings contain no single work that can be taken to be representative of British views on India, and to which a certain idea of strategic significance can be traced back. However, the colonial influence on

India's strategic outlook is undeniable, given that a number of images associated with India did not exist prior to the advent of the British. The set of colonial writings on seemingly disparate subjects may not appear to be of immediate relevance, especially given the case study under focus. However, it would be a gross misperception to treat works of the colonial period as part of the already existent body of literature on India, both indigenous and external. These writings were distinct both in their approach and impact from earlier interpretations. Unlike previous accounts of foreign travellers, which reflected a sense of curiosity to investigate an unfamiliar land, much of the colonial literature was an exercise in power. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued that the influence of previous accounts waned over time as they were not part of an overarching project of the kind which extended the supportive apparatus of the British empire to the colonial writers. It must be added that while some aspects of colonial constructions are highlighted, others are recessed in IR literature on India's soft power.

Much of the existing literature on the area is an exercise in reductionism that gives a static account of India and its evolving strategic patterns. Studies on the strategic approach of Indians down centuries typically range from orientalist writings to inward-looking revivalist literature. Although both approaches offer contrasting strategic images of India, they converge on one crucial detail. India as a subject was presumed to be amenable to essentialisation. The diverse experiences of millennia were distilled to arrive at an unchanging and unitary essence that signified India's worldview. A look at current theorisations on the subject would set the context within which it can be then understood. Hence, a study of the relevant literature must necessarily begin with the orientalist discourse as many of the images it threw up about India carry strategic import. These images persist not only in current works on Indian strategic thought, but also in the perceptions of India's decision-making elite.

Some of the earliest writings that held important implications for India's strategic practice and shaped much of the literature on the area that followed belonged to the orientalist school.[61] In early nineteenth century, the term 'orientalist' was part of

[61] Thapar identifies three key trends that characterised studies into ancient Indian history spearheaded chiefly by the Orientalists, the Utilitarians and the Nationalists. The Orientalists, for whom the Vedic period epitomised a utopian state the search for the idyllic society was spurred by domestic developments. Industrialisation was threatening to erode the cultural moorings of Europe, and the ancient Orient had

philology, especially with regard to Asian languages. In the 1830s, it came to refer to a British scholar who studied Indian culture and laws and argued that these should be observed in the governance of the country. The Orientalists, who offered some of the first European accounts of India, displayed a scholarly interest in exploring the culture and traditions of India and highlighted the distinct aspects of the country that set it apart from the West's.[62] India came to represent the uncorrupted idea of human existence that Europe had lost in its march towards modernity. As J.J. Clarke notes, this projection of the image of the ideal polity onto India 'was deployed as a means of treating what were seen as deep-seated ills at the heart of contemporary European culture.' (Clarke 1997: 60) The Orientalists were most active from 1772 and 1830 and established the College of Fort William in Calcutta where Asian languages such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Sanskrit were taught.[63] One of its staunch supporters was Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India, who was instrumental in the creation of an Indianised civil service that was proficient in Indian languages. The establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 under William Jones, who was an East India Company official himself, marked a significant step in that direction. (Kopf 1995: 141)

The body of colonial thought was meant to justify imperial rule in India to its administrators and imbue their mission with a sense of purpose. Accordingly, the British scholarship approached its subject with paternalistic concern, characteristic of a power that was aware of its responsibilities of reform and upliftment.[64] (Franklin 2006: 13) Lord Curzon asserted that the British should do well

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achieved great cultural advances, which though forgotten had to be retrieved to show the way for the degenerate people of Europe and India. (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 3; Alam and Alavi 2001: 45)

[62] Max Mueller's adoption of the Sanskritised name Moksha Mula was symbolic of the Orientalist identification with ancient Indian culture. (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 3) Amartya Sen identifies three distinct approaches through which India came to be observed and understood: exoticist, magisterial and curatorial. Unlike the exoticist approach which looked for exotic and the strange aspects of Indian life, and the magisterial which saw India as a subject country, the curatorial approach was informed by a general interest in classifying and studying various dimensions of Indian culture. (Sen 1997: 4-5)

[63] As Kopf notes, the College of Fort William was 'the first European-created institution for higher learning in India to welcome Indians as faculty members and to encourage cultural exchange between Europeans and South Asians.' (Kopf 1995: 154)

[64] Macaulay clearly stated the purpose of the colonial mission in his *Minute on Education* thus, 'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern;

'...to remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of his ploughs [...] to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment, or a stirring of duty, where it did not before exist. That is enough, that is the Englishman's justification in India.' (Cited in Metcalf 1994: 168)

Uday Mehta explores the strategies that liberal thinkers employed to justify exclusionist colonial practices in India within liberalism's egalitarian universalism. One of the most effective colonial strategies was that of inscrutability: the unfathomable and chaotic quality of India which frustrates the rational observer. The charge of inscrutability was no random accusation by the exasperated rationalist, but constituted the cornerstone of colonial discourse. The designation of inscrutability places the onus on the object that resists comprehension without incriminating the observer. Its inability to represent itself in a manner that is comprehensible to all provides Britain with the justification to represent India and recompense for its deficiency. Taken together, inscrutability implied maintaining a measure of distance from the confounding details and opacity of the Indian way of life. (Mehta 1999: 68)

The second exclusionist strategy of civilisational infantilism resorts to the reverse approach: intensified engagement with the historical and cultural specificities of India that lays bare its insufficiencies.[65] We see here the deployment of culture as a tool of exclusion, which divided colonies into two classes. Whereas colonies in America and Australia were 'of similar civilization to the ruling country; capable of and ripe for representative government', other colonies like India had cultures that were dissimilar to the British, making them unfit for self governance. India could develop only under the

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a class of persons, Indian in blood or colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.' (Macaulay 1862: 115)

[65] The simultaneity of both strategies is reconciled by the standard against which India figures in the schema of progress. The standard that informs India's position in the civilisational hierarchy is that of specificity: as an illustrative example. India mattered for its *specificity*, as an instance of backwardness and not for its *singularity* in terms of its particularities. Detailing per se is not a concern for a liberal thinker like Mill, since he is interested in fitting India within a general framework, rather than take the schema apart with its uniqueness. The context for specificity is the schema of progress within which all societies are instances of one stage or the other. Therefore, historical detail matters only insofar as it demonstrated a general law and its historical significance. (Mehta 1999: 111)

cloak of authoritarianism, and the course of action before colonial administrators is presented by what J.S. Mill called 'a choice of despotisms'. (Mehta 1999: 71) Colonial practices that sought to reconcile liberalism with imperialism are similarly studied by David Strang who argues that the connotations of sovereignty within the system of imperial powers were very different from the manner in which it was interpreted and applied to in the case of their colonies. As Strang points out,

> '...imperialism did not refer back to the identity or purposes of the Western polity, because non-Western states and peoples were seen as fundamentally different from their Western counterparts. One could be a liberal domestically and an imperialist in Asia and Africa.' (Strang 1996: 34-35)

All colonial ventures of exploration, classification and categorisation of India's social as well as natural spheres were part of the larger imperial project of knowing the subject country well in order to control it better. Both endeavours were informed by the same purpose of how the available resources could be exploited to serve British needs. (Roosa 1995: 141) The journal *Asiatik Researches*, of which Jones was the editor, carried out extensive surveys between 1788 and 1839 of the natural and human resources in India. It published 174 articles on the flora and fauna of India and another 172 articles on Indian history and languages. The colonial urge to institutionalise knowledge stemmed from an underlying mistrust of the native, dependence on whom, it was feared, would be to the detriment of the system. This prejudice assumed structural proportions with the organisation of knowledge that went on to progressively insulate the processes of administration from the influence of the Indians. (Alamgir 2006: 429) According to Bernard Cohn, the British conducted a number of 'historical modalities' to systematically build up a repository of knowledge about the colonial people. One of the modalities sought to amass knowledge of political practices and traditions followed by preceding rulers to facilitate better and efficient governance of the country. Another line of enquiry concerned piecing together India's civilisational history in a manner that justified colonial rule. (Cohn 1996: 5-6; Pinch 1999: 397)

However, colonialism was not initially imbued with this sense of purpose that went on to inform its subsequent ventures.[66] That colonisation till about the nineteenth century was not the outcome of a calculated strategy is evident from Seeley's remark that 'we seem...to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'. (Seeley 1971: 8) This ad hoc nature of colonialism is brought into sharper focus when it is juxtaposed with the more organised phenomenon of imperialism, the distinction highlighting the heterogeneous ways in which power was exercised during the colonial period. As Young points out,

> 'Colonization was pragmatic and until the nineteenth century generally developed locally in a haphazard way...while imperialism was typically driven by ideology from the metropolitan centre and concerned with the assertion and expansion of state power.' (Young 2001: 16-17)

The post-Renaissance period saw a sea change in European historiography, with emphasis now on empirical evidence, chronological sequencing of historical events and on establishing causal relationships. These concerns were duly reflected in the British approach to the subject of Indian history. The larger context to the entire intellectual venture was social evolutionism, wherein India drew its identity in relation to Europe by embodying its past in the scale of evolution. (Thapar 2000a: 156-158) Peter van der Veer argues that much of nineteenth century British historiography was marked by 'little Englandism', wherein mainstream history was believed to be immune to colonial experiences. This trend was set against the 'big Indianism' of Indian historiography which projected India as possessing an inherent ability to imbibe external influences without losing its essential character. (Veer 2001: 8) In the next segment, we will examine the influence Orientalist philosophy had on the manner in which India's strategic history was interpreted and imagined.

[66] Internal differences on the degree and nature of British involvement in the governance of the country belied the image of the British as a monolith in India. While the Orientalists favoured internal reform of Hinduism through the introduction of modern ideas, the Evangelicals believed in the moral upliftment of the Indians through the teaching of Christian tenets. The Orientalist approach meant that the measure of distance to be maintained in dealing with the colonial people was in the danger of being violated.

Overlay of Orientalism and the Scripting of India's Strategic History

The inherent power and appeal of ideas was grasped and tapped early by Eurocentric writers, who tended to justify colonialism in ideational rather than in material terms. Colonies were seen as steeped in ascriptive identities, and reined back from development due to their regressive traditions.[67] The mission of colonialism, and later modernisation was to introduce progressive, rational ideas in these traditional societies.[68] The notion that ideas were potential catalysts of change that could release societies from the stasis they found themselves in was central to the orientalist discourse. As Said noted,

> 'Orientalism staked its existence, not upon its openness, its receptivity to the Orient, but rather on its *internal repetitious consistency* about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient. In such a way, Orientalism was able to survive revolutions, world wars, and the literal dismemberment of empires.' (Said 2001: 222, emphasis added)

The quality of internal consistency implies that the identical set of Orientalist images about the Orient applied to all disciplines along the familiar markers of despotism, irrationality and traditionalism. (Simons 2004: 272) This power of representation that the British appropriated yielded a coherent and interrelated set of images about India that Indians came to believe in. With the erstwhile colonial subjects internalising these representations as true to form, the 'Self is presented back to the Other in the categories of that Other'. (Clammer 2003: 21) This tendency is particularly evident in the ideological position of right-wing parties in India, which reinforce the exclusionist notion of a pre-colonial national identity that was ironically propounded by the colonialists

[67] The general disdain for 'irrational' practices in India can be discerned in the sixteenth century writings of Thomas Roe and Francois Bernier. Disapproving of the respect astrologers commanded in Mughal India, Bernier wrote, 'The majority of *Asiatics* are so infatuated in favour of being guided by the signs of the heavens, that, according to their phraseology, no circumstances can happen below, which is not written above.' (Bernier 1891: 161) However, colonial writings made certain distinctions among the non-Europeans. The 'barbarous infidels' of the East led degraded lives because of the civilisational excesses evident in the blind pursuit of power and wealth. On the other hand, the 'savages' of Africa and the Americas were deprived of the fruits of civilisation, and hence were primitive. (Cooper 2006: 98)

[68] The concept of the civilising mission originated in France's *mission civilisatrice*. According to Alice Conklin, 'to be civilised was to be free from specific forms of tyranny: the tyranny of the elements over man, of disease over health, of instinct over reason, of ignorance over knowledge and of despotism over liberty.' The rational man's avowed love for all things civilised went on to inform the higher objectives of colonialism in lands that were seen to be wallowing in depravity and irrationality. (Cited in Mann 2004: 4)

themselves. Thus, it would be instructive to begin by examining the caricatures that have crept into the strategic discourse on India before we turn to history for their refutation.

1. Caste and human agency in India: Indology presumed all civilisations were reducible to unitary essences, and the essence of Indian civilisation lay in the institution of caste. (Inden 1986) The caste system was seen as the cause behind a divided and weak Indian society and its vulnerability to repeated conquests by invaders. The domination of caste in major Indological accounts implied that the role of indigenous political institutions was undermined. India was depicted as a country where political institutions symbolising the unity of the state were subsumed by a conflict-ridden civil society and hence, could not foster an atmosphere conducive to strategising. The absence of united and purposeful action was to J.S. Mill, symptomatic of social backwardness. He asserted,

> 'In savage communities...we seldom see any joint operations carried on by the union of many; nor do savages find much pleasure in each other's society. Wherever, therefore, we find human beings acting together for common purposes, in large bodies and enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse, we term them civilized.' (Mill 1973: 46)

The upholding of the *varna* system as the basis of social order in India led the British to conclude that Hindus were tied down by the duties of their caste due to which they could do little to change their position in society. (Roosa 1995: 143) This bred a mentality of fatalism that made human progress impossible in history. Moreover, faith in predestined course of events and stress on afterlife made Indians otherworldly with no concern for material betterment. Inden succinctly summarises the orientalist position.

> 'Indian civilization is...unlike the west, fundamentally a product of its environment...European civilization is the product of rational human action... [India] was from her very origin pre-conquered by caste and Hinduism and pre-condemned...to centuries of decline and stagnation. Her people, including their leaders, have, thus, not been true agents of their own actions, the makers of their history....' (Inden 1986: 441)

Nicholas Dirks sees the reinforcement of caste in Orientalist texts as an instance of reflexivity. His correlation illustrates Said's argument that the texts '*create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe'. (Said 2001: 94) According to Dirks,

'...colonialism seems to have created much of what is now accepted as Indian 'tradition', including an autonomous caste structure with the Brahman clearly and unambiguously at the head.'[69] (Dirks 1992: 61)

The works of British ethnographers such as Buchanan Hamilton's *The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India* (1838) and Herbert Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (1891) do not reveal the single, overarching caste structure that was to later become a colonial representation. If at all, they bring out the fact that social stratification was fluid and subject to sharp regional variations. Buchanan realised that internal distinctions prevented the *brahmins* from appropriating the top position of a relatively fluid social hierarchy. He found 'that in the early ages the term Brahman would not appear to have been hereditarily annexed to the sacred order.' (Cited in Waligora 2004: 148) Half a century later, Risley reiterated Buchanan's observation.

'Caste then, at least in the rigid form in which we now know it, is an institution of comparatively late origin.... [T]he testimony of the whole body of Vedic literature as interpreted by modern scholars is adverse to the existence of a clear-defined hierarchy of endogamous castes....Even in the Epic era the system had not hardened into its later form....Brahmanhood is a matter of personal qualities and aptitudes rather than of descent.' (Risley 1891: 142-143)

The association of caste with race, absent in the Buchanan's observations, becomes evident in Risley's work, when he argues that castes were obsessed with maintaining their racial purity. For instance, although the artisans of Bengal belonged to the high status group in the ancient, pre-brahmanical social hierarchy, rigid notions of purity and sanctity were absent from their social observances, as was the primacy of birth that was to later determine positions in the caste structure.[70]

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[69] Melitta Waligora makes a similar point, arguing that caste 'is a fact of Indian society, but not in an ahistorical, all-embracing, idealized, brahminical, fixed hierarchical manner. The way that 'caste' and the 'caste system' are conceptualised today is, to a certain extent, the result of colonial ideology and practice.' (Waligora 2004: 142)

[70] Such pre-modern social hierarchies were not unique to India, and Europe saw the similar ostracisation of certain professional categories. In Germany till the nineteenth century, grave-diggers, executioners and tanners were branded as 'dishonourable people' who were not allowed to socially mingle with the rest of the population. (Waligora 2004: 156-157) However, scholars like Ashok Rudra differentiate between the modes of social control that maintained hierarchical order in Europe and India: whereas it was violence in the former case, it was the 'ideology'of dharma in the case of India that obviated the need to resort to violence. For more on related literature, see Embree 1985: 28-29.

However, it would be erroneous to argue that colonial policies alone determined the rigid contours of the caste system. The ritualisation of the caste structure by the priestly and warrior class as a means to protecting their privileged position in society was instrumental in demarcating the caste distinctions. (Sharma 1990: 98) This particular instance of reflexivity which began with British research into Indian society was a graduated exercise. The initial phase of studying the Hindu scriptures gave way to empirical research in mid-nineteenth century that focussed on the enumeration and classification of Indian population along ethnic and social identities. The categorisation of society into an overarching caste system was based on the information that such official investigations yielded. Whether or not historically the inability to repulse foreign invasion lay in India's fractious society, the British emphasis on its caste-ridden, splintered nature ensured that no united and cohesive revolt to its power ever arose. This intention was articulated by the principal of the Presidency College in Calcutta, James Kerr in no uncertain terms.

> 'It may be doubted if the existence of caste is on the whole unfavourable to the permanence of our rule. It may even be considered favourable to it, provided we act with prudence and forbearance. Its spirit is opposed to national union.' (Cited in Bandyopadhyay 1985: 63)

In a civilised society, reason came to replace violence in the negotiations among its members. Since civilisation implied a control over violence, it became coterminous with the state, which enforced restraint through its legal and coercive apparatus. The history of the state is the history of progress that came to associate pejorative connotations to the phenomenon of violence. It explains the association of violence with the uncivilised and the barbaric and perhaps is the reason why it is seldom dealt as such in historical accounts.[71] Coercive ventures of the state such as battles and wars are distinguished from incidence of raw violence that lack direction, purpose and rationale. Battles are justified by the higher objective that a state strives to achieve by waging them, arguably a more peaceful and stable society. Violence, on the other hand, is the hallmark of anarchy- a condition that lies outside the pale of the state, and indeed, predates it. Gyanendra Pandey asserts that the notion of violence has been conventionally regarded as

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[71] For more on the imperialist discourse on barbarianism and civilisation, see Salter 2002.

belonging to the pre-historical period. Precisely because the state has very little to do with what falls beyond its limits, history has always recognised violence as the anti-thesis of civilisation and progress. (Pandey 1999: 6-10)

> 'History proceeds on the assumption of a fixed subject- community, nation, state- and a broadly pre-determined course of human development or transformation. The violence that accompanies 'progress' and 'civilization'...finds little place in the historical narrative.' (Pandey 1999: 47)

Such a reading offers a homogenous picture of the community under focus, sustained by stable forces internal to it. The subject remains fixed and well-defined primarily because the destabilising force of violence is externalised to some outside source. Within the community, individuals together constitute a collectivity but are incapable of fundamentally disturbing its internal balance. Any resort to violence by individuals is rendered senseless and chaotic by the eternal truth that they lack agency against the state which is the monopolist of force. The price for the inclusion into the political community is paid with the power of agency which all members must surrender, and with it forsake any claims over a legitimate cause to rebel. (Pandey 1999: 47) Pandey succinctly summed up the colonial position on violence outside the state.

> 'Violence is Civilization's other, as it were. It is what Civilization and History are not. The phenomenon of violence belongs to a domain of *pre*-history...' (Pandey 1999: 9, emphasis original)

The reason for this extended explanation of history's fixation with internally ordered communities is to draw attention to the subject that conventionally falls outside its purview, namely that of anarchy which was said to have prevailed in India till the advent of the British. In historical accounts, the normal condition of a stable and harmonious society did not apply to pre-colonial India which was beset by anarchical conditions of internal strife and political disorder. The numerous kings who ruled over fragmented domains continually jostled for power, rendering the country vulnerable to outside attacks. In brief, pre-colonial India was not an evolved political community that was internally stable, but disturbed by an external source of violence. The irrational violence that was externalised from a civilised society was an internal phenomenon in the case of India; indeed, it was its endemic feature. Invasions thus came to be qualified as wars of conquest and not as destabilising forces of violence. Pre-colonial India was an

India of pre-history, anarchy and barbarism. Into this pre-historical setting of endemic violence came the British who introduced order hitherto unknown to this country. Pandey drives home the point, arguing that

> '...with or without the restraining influence of caste, this was a society of un-Civilization, pre-History and primitive passions. Violence, untamed, and pretty much indiscriminate, was the mark of the Indian past, until India came up against the civilizing influence of British administration and a western education in temperate manners.' (Pandey 1999: 8)

The portrayal of India as a country sunk in anarchy provided the legitimate opening for British intervention and the justification of the colonial cause. Colonialism was said to have ushered in restraint in Indian society, still external in the sense that it had to be enforced through laws and not yet internally cultivated by its members. When peace and stability prevailed under the colonialists, history began for India in the true sense of the word. By introducing the lawless people to authority, colonialism brought with it the fruits of civilisation, namely the all-powerful state whose progress history was to henceforth record.

2. A fractured and defensive society: Orientalism presumed that for time immemorial, India was politically fragmented into a number of warring kingdoms engaged in internecine warfare till the British gained control. The situation was rendered chaotic by the absence of an overarching authority which could have regulated relations between the smaller polities. The argument justifying British rule held the larger implication that given its fractured political history, India failed to develop a coherent tradition of strategic thinking. The necessary prerequisite of a unifying political entity that could strategise for the entire country simply did not exist. The British administrators pointed to instances in India's past to argue that the disunity, in conjunction with other factors such as the country's philosophical traditions and the societal position of the individual, contributed to the inability of the Indians to act decisively in a sustained manner.[72] Karl Marx wrote in 1853 on the future of British rule in India:

[72] However, colonial disdain for the incapacities of the indigenous people did not prevent colonial powers like the Portuguese from recruiting them in large numbers to fill their rank and file. (Scammell 1988: 482)

'A country not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindoo, but also between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste....were they not the *predestined prey of conquest*?...Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society. The question, therefore, is not whether the English had a right to conquer India, but whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton....' (Marx 2003: 123-124, emphasis added)

Similarly, J.S. Mill argued that in the Orient, 'success in life is seen or believed to be the fruit of fatality or accident and not of exertion....' (Mill 2003: 116) Particularly to the Evangelicals like Charles Grant, reforms worked for Europeans because of their 'manly character', but would be ineffective in the case of the 'effeminate' Indians. (Mann 2004: 11) Unlike the West where the individual was the autonomous agent and the mover of history, in India the decision-making elite lacked the ability to shape the destiny of its people through effective strategising.

However, history reveals a different political picture which does not conform to the scenario of total chaos that the British claimed to have set in order. Inden points to the hierarchical structure in which warring kingdoms in early medieval India (from mid-eighth century to early thirteenth century AD) were arranged, wherein the lower-order kings submitted to and recognised the paramountcy of the 'king of kings'. (Inden 2006: 129) A separate terminology that referred to the king enjoying paramount status existed, indicating the functionality of the hierarchical order. He is variously referred to as *rajaraja* (the king of kings), *maharajadhiraja* (the high king of great kings) and *chakravartin* (the overlord of the entire earth), an implicit recognition that his powers extended over the territories of the smaller kings who paid obeisance to him. With regard to the paramount king, the issue of what sovereignty implied is interesting. Both internal and external sovereignty overlapped and were eventually centred in his person. Within his own territory, he was to establish social order that prescribed to the hierarchical system, while externally it was his sovereign right and duty to maintain the hierarchy of kings, at the apex of which he was positioned. (Inden 2006: 132-133) There were several indicators of power along which this structure of power relations among kings was drawn. Besides the scale of difference in terms of territorial acquisitions, the paramount

king also possessed superior manpower (ministers and generals) and more assets (arms, horses and wealth) than the smaller kings. (Inden 2006: 146)

The visual representation of this hierarchical order of kings was meticulously created in the grand assembly of the great king in which the other smaller kings were assigned places according to their position in the order.[73] The structure of the imperial court was a manifestation of the grand cosmological order given in the *Puranas*. The earth was depicted as comprising six concentric islands separated by water, at the centre of which was the island of *Jambudvipa* and atop that was the Mount Meru. *Bharatvarsa* located on Meru, replicated the realms of *Jambudvipa* where the centre became the seat of power and prosperity. The metaphors used in the *Puranas* to signify the earth placed great emphasis on the notion of the centre that, by virtue of its cardinal location in the hierarchical order, contained within it the energies of the entire cosmos. Therein lies the rationale behind the imperial replication of the cosmological order, manifested even in the minutiae of architectural designing of courts and palaces. The paramount king as the embodiment of the Cosmic Man (*Purusha*) aspired to make his kingdom a representation of the *Bharatvarsha* which contained within it the order of *Jambudvipa*, signifying the entire earth. The analogy highlighted the paramount status of the king in terms of locating his kingdom at the centre of India, from which he presided over the entire earth. (Inden 2006: 149-151)[74]

3. Rationality and its absence in India: The distinction between the real and the apparent, the this-worldly and the other-worldly, and between the rational and the superstitious was played out in the power relations of the Occident and the Orient. The

[73] The position of the kings in the hierarchy was determined by the size of their territories expressed in numerical figures of the number of villages under their control. Thus, there were eight provinces or 'half kingdoms' of 50,000 villages which fell within four provincial kingdoms that together made up the imperial kingdom. (Inden 2006: 143-144)

[74] Krishnaraja I was one such king of kings 'whose pair of feet were worshipped (*abhivand*) by the multitudes of Great Kings who had assembled to serve (him)'. (Cited in Inden 2006: 135) The realisation of the three goals of dharma by the kings depended on the execution of *rajadharma* by the paramount king. If he failed to establish order in his kingdom and maintain the hierarchy of kings, the smaller kings would eventually succumb to the anarchical state of the 'justice of fishes' or *matsyayana*. (Inden 2006: 155)

Orient ruled in the realm of imagination whereas the Occident dominated the realm of reality. Thomas Macaulay conceded that

> 'the department of literature in which the eastern writers stand highest is poetry…But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded, and general principles investigated the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable.'[75] (Macaulay 1862: 107)

Poetry, seen as the product of the human imagination was incompatible with history which dwelt on the happenings of reality. The idealistic realm of possibilities (what could have been) clashed with the rational domain of actual events (what has happened). For Hegel, the Western man existed in the 'sphere of *Understanding*', in which reality was 'an external, fixed objectivity' independent of his existence. In contrast, the Indian living in 'the state of dreaming' was unable to make the distinction and reposed objective things with divinity instead. Consequently, '*Things* are as much stripped of rationality, of finite consistent stability of cause and effect, as *man* is of the steadfastness of free individuality, of personality, and freedom.' (Hegel 2003: 220-221, emphasis original) Oriental religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism are associated with enigma, magic and fantasy, lacking the level of complexity and spirituality achieved by the Occident. Eastern religions 'enslave the Spirit to the world of realities' by stifling individualism, whereas the Protestant West allowed for its free expression and its transformation into reality. (Acikel 2006: 65) The dominance over the realm of reality was a superior feat as it could be controlled and thereby, the power of human agency could be demonstrated.

The advocacy of the West as the font of rationality and progress thus tended to 'primitivise' the discourses in the East. (Goody 1996: 37) Max Weber, for instance placed Europe at the apex of the scale of social evolution, marked off from the rest by its rationality. Weber's concern with the emergence of modern institutions led him to locate its cause in cultural specificities of religions. Protestantism provided the enabling environment for the development of capitalist ethics and bureaucratisation in the West,

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[75] The distinction between poetry and history that can be traced back to Aristotle came into sharp focus in eighteenth and nineteenth century English thought which privileged action over thought. The conflation of history with factual accounts was evident in works of Mill and Macaulay. (Lal 2003: 34)

whereas the inherent traits of Oriental religions impeded its growth in the East.[76] Weber asserts that none of the Asian religions 'provided the motives or orientations for a rationalised ethical patterning of the creaturely world in accordance with divine commandments.' (Weber 1993: 267)

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber further argued,

> 'Indian geometry has no rational proof.... [All] Indian political thought was lacking in rational concepts... [T]the state itself...is known...only in the Occident. [The] concept of the citizen has not existed outside the Occident.' (Cited in Blaut 2000: 25)

The area in which the prowess of rationality could be tested and demonstrated was believed to be that of science. It is then little surprise that the colonialists seeking to belittle Indian understanding of rationality targeted its science systems. Macaulay, for instance was sceptical of the ability of Indians to make progress in science. He regarded Indian sciences as 'a study which nobody describes as useful in itself', and he would not be surprised if 'the natives should have become sick of learning this useless mysticism before we become sick of teaching it'. Indian advancements in astronomy were to him so appalling that they 'would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school'. (Macaulay 1862: 10-11) Orientalists who chose to study Indian astronomy did not differ much from Macaulay in this regard, considering the works on the subject as lacking credibility. Jones held that when it comes to the sciences, 'the Asiatics, if compared with Western nations, are mere children.' (Cited in Young 2003: 190)

It was not merely indigenous sciences that Macaulay regarded with contempt. He was equally sceptical of the level of literary consciousness that the Indians displayed. He held in his famous *Minute on Education*,

> 'I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works...I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.' (Macaulay 1862: 107)

[76]. Christianity was rational also because it conformed to the principal tenets of the natural sciences. The laws of nature were interpreted as acts of God. (Veer 2001: 25-28)

Similarly, history comprised of nothing more than exaggerated accounts of 'kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long' whereas geography resembled 'seas of treacle and seas of butter'. (Macaulay 1862: 109) Macaulay condemned

> 'wasting public money, for printing books which are of less value than the paper on which they are printed was while it was blank; for giving artificial encouragement to absurd history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, absurd theology; for raising up a breed of scholars who find their scholarship an encumbrance and a blemish.' (Macaulay 1862: 115-116)

He was thus wary of patronising indigenous science systems although he realised '...that the people are wedded to those systems, and that by withdrawing our patronage from them, we should disgust our native subjects.' (Macaulay 1862: 10-11) One of the paradoxes of colonialism, Gyan Prakash notes, was that

> '...the writ of rationality and order was always overwritten by its denial in the colonies, the pieties of progress always violated irreverently in practice...Paradoxes and ironies abounded, as did the jurisdiction of the gap between rhetoric and practice on the grounds of expediency and the exceptional circumstances of the colonies.' (Prakash 1994: 1)

The Western notion of rationality was an intrinsic part of the Enlightenment project that created an array of stark dichotomies which were seen to be mutually exclusive of each other in their roles and influences. The public realm was separated from the private as was science from religion. However, this was not always the case as reason and religion did not develop independent of the other and their trajectories often intersected.[77] (King 1999: 12-13) Rationality has been debated in stark terms that place the progressive West in direct opposition to other backward regions, within a 'rationality against ritual' frame of reference, and is one of the key qualities the West is regarded to possess that facilitated its rise. (Goody 1996: 14)

The justification has followed two traditions that concentrate on different time spans, namely on the syllogistic reasoning of ancient Greece and on the modern rationality of the Renaissance period. The development of formal syllogism in ancient

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[77] Western suspicion of such procedures stems from its own experiences within the Christian faith. Deviant practices that explained phenomena in terms of factors outside the Biblical scheme of things faced outright rejection. The dismissive attitude to belief systems in the East can thus be seen as an extension of that very orthodoxy. (Goody 1996: 42)

Greece was due to the existence of certain historical circumstances.[78] However, it did not make the possession of reason as a characteristic peculiar to the West, and cultural variants of rationality are to be found in all societies. (Goody 1996: 11) For instance, India evolved its own variants of syllogistic reasoning. The *Nyaya-sutra* worked out the five-part syllogism, which was further compressed into either the first three or the last three sections in Buddhist logic during sixth century CE.[79] Jack Goody argues that the diffusion of writing contributed to the spread of formal syllogism to the rest of the world. But as he asserts,

> '...even if we accept the diffusionist argument, India would have acquired formal syllogistic reasoning *before* western Europe...In other words, the East had as much claim to these Greek achievements as the West that was later to become the home for the development of industrial capitalism and of 'modern' knowledge systems.' (Goody 1996: 35, emphasis original)

Since all societies were by some measure rational, dissemination was not of the faculty of reason per se, but of rationalising techniques that made cumulative knowledge possible. Goody argued, ''Logic' in the limited meaning is developed in writing; logic in the broader sense is a pan-human phenomenon'. (Goody 1996: 35) The spread of writing and information enabled other rational societies to develop particular logic systems such as formal syllogism. A spread of this kind cannot be held to have had a totalising influence that is normally associated with the dissemination of an invention. Hence, it is imperative that rationality 'be given a more 'historical', less culturally enduring character.' (Goody 1996: 47)

4. The Oriental Despot: The British regarded Indian history to be replete with examples of despotic rule by emperors. Oriental despotism entailed the usurpation of political power by the monarch to the detriment of the society. (*IOLR/H/191*) The Mughal

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[78] Syllogistic reasoning or sequential reasoning as we commonly today in the familiar format (of A=B, C=B, therefore, A=C) developed in ancient Greece due to a number of enabling factors. The literate Greek culture facilitated the formalisation of reasoned arguments, further commentaries on which were also recorded in writing, leading to an accretion of literature. Furthermore, this body of literature was sustained through an educational process that used writing as its main medium of instruction. (Goody 1996: 17-18)

[79] The five-part syllogism in the *Nyaya-sutra* was structured as follows- Proposition (*pratijna*), Reason (*hetu*), Example (*drstanta*), Application (*upanaya*) and Conclusion (*nigamana*). (Goody 1996: 25)

emperor was no exception, as Robert Orme elucidated in his impressions of a centralised system, in which the ruler at the apex was the only symbol of permanence in a transient order.[80] He wrote,

> 'The Sovereign reserved to himself the power of Life and Death…the Nabob…was called to court, kept there, or translated into another government, whenever the Ministry thought these changes necessary, and there was a time when they were so frequent, that a new Nabob left Delhi riding contrary to the usual manner with his back turned to the head of his Elephant and gave for a reason, "That he was looking out for his Successor".' (Orme 1782: 91)

Alexander Dow, in his introduction to Ferishta's *History of Hindostan*, projected a similar image of India.

> 'The history now given to the public, presents us with a striking picture of the deplorable condition of a people subjected to arbitrary sway; and of the instability of empire itself, when it is founded neither on law, nor upon the opinions and attachments of mankind….The people permit themselves to be transferred from one tyrant to another, without murmuring…' (Dow 1772, 1: xi)

Centuries of despotic rule had supposedly rendered the Indian people incapable of enjoying the benefits of a free government.[81] It was widely agreed upon that till the reforms took effect, the British would have to rule with a firm hand and hence, the antidote to Oriental despotism lay in 'benevolent despotism'. What is noteworthy is that historical evidence that pointed to the emergence of the state in India in the first millennium BC is not reflected in orientalist writings on Indian political systems. This omission is particularly glaring given the fact that the transition from chiefdoms to a

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[80] One of the flawed assumptions that the Orientalists worked on regarding the Mughals was that the public and private realms were separate spheres that seldom intersected. The notion of a secluded space away from the public gaze enabled them to conjure up images of the Mughal haram as a cloistered domain of exploitation and bondage. However, as Ruby Lal points out, the two spaces overlapped in several politically significant ways to the extent that the line of demarcation between the court and the haram was blurred. (Lal 2005: 21)

[81] Ironically, when it came to assessing the history of Europe, a philosopher like J.S. Mill grasped the nub of contextualism very well indeed. Mill was sympathetic towards the shortfalls of European history which its progression had overcome. The same could not be said of the Orientals whose past signified a level of backwardness that was reiterated in every age. (Chapman 1996) He added,

> 'To find fault with our ancestors for not having annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot, would be like quarrelling with the Greeks and Romans for not using steam navigation, when we know it is so safe and expeditious; which would be, in short, simply finding fault with the third century before Christ for not being the eighteenth century after.' (Mill 1942: 48)

monarchical state constitutes the central theme in the ancient epics of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. (Thapar 1986: 65)

5. 'Hinduising' and Brahmanising India: Orientalism systematised Hinduism through 'textualisation', i.e. the exercise of seeking the essence of a religion in certain sacred texts. Aided by brahmins who acted as informants, it was no surprise that the British venture of excavating India's past threw up a textualised and Brahmanised version of Hinduism.[82] (Thapar 2000b: 27-28) As John Roosa argues,

> '...ancient texts were seen as impartial and had priority over living bearers of that tradition as the present state of Indians was seen as depraved...Jones believed it was the duty of the British to return them to that golden age of ancient India.' (Roosa 1995: 140)

According to colonial accounts, Indian civilisation developed in relative isolation from the rest of the world.[83] Ancient India was taken as the essence of Indian culture and was privileged over its living representation. As Thapar notes,

> 'Histories of the 'Hindu' religion have been largely limited to placing texts and ideas in a chronological perspective with few attempts at relating these to the social history of the time. Scholarship also tended to ignore the significance of the popular manifestation of religion in contrast to the textual...' (Thapar 2004: 335)

The search for India's 'pure' essence in the ancient period is in Nietzschean terms 'a metaphysical extension which arises from the belief that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth.' (Cited in Michael Drolet 2004: 74) This assumption stems from the anthropological approach that lays stress on the 'lived' nature of culture, in which the 'native' acquires central importance in its conceptualisation. In its extreme version, nativism that 'exceptionalizes the native and glorifies them to excess' regards others as mere settlers, and hence attributes alien status to them. (Reeves 2004: 10-11)

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[82] Indeed the strife between the Vaishnavite and Saivite cults in pre-colonial India had been of such extreme proportions that both could be regarded as distinct 'religions' with little in common. That conflicts tended to appear between specific groups and not distinct religions was borne out in the alliances that the early Muslim invaders struck with the natives. The collaborations were such that they did not conform to distinctions between the native and the foreign. (Oddie 2003: 160)

[83] Subsumed within this image of a secluded monolith was the history of thriving Indian merchant networks that connected coastal India to Asia and Europe from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. (Markovits 2000: 5)

Julie Reeves employs the notion of the tourist to not only emphasise the perceived insignificance of the settlers to the identity of the native, but also draw attention to their status as the proverbial 'other' against whom that very identity is constructed. As she points out,

> 'If the native represents all that is 'pure, unique, and enduring' in a culture or way of life, then the tourist stands for everything that is deemed impure and/or temporary on a mass scale. Where the native appears as a permanent feature in the local landscape, the tourist can be glimpsed flying overhead or breezing past on a bus, or setting up a corner shop.' (Reeves 2004: 12-13)

The 'native' in the colonial Indian context was the quintessential Hindu who was repressed by the invading hordes of 'alien' Muslims. The hunt for the pure essence of Indian culture led the colonialists to look beyond the native, at certain classical texts of ancient India. The two key texts that for the British held the key to the identity of India were Manu's *Dharmashastras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Translated in the eighteenth century by Jones and Charles Wilkins respectively, the treatises were taken to be representative of Hinduism, whereas practices and belief systems which did not conform to its essential character were seen as its corrupted versions. As Kopf notes,

> 'The task of integrating a vast collection of myths, beliefs, rituals and laws into a coherent religion and of shaping an amorphous heritage into a rational faith known now as Hinduism were endeavours initiated by Orientalists'. (Kopf 1995: 142)

The search for the purified core of Hinduism was a fundamentally ahistorical enterprise that ignored the diversity of religious practices in India. (King 1999: 104) The codification of Hindu and Islamic laws that followed provided the administrators with a standard postulation of religious codes. Over time, this emphasis on texts as setting the standards of Hinduism brought rigidity into the observation of its principles and practices. Thapar observes that

> '[t]he evolution of Hinduism is not a linear progression from a founder through an organizational system, with sects branching off. It is rather the mosaic cults, deities, sects, and ideas and the adjusting, juxtaposing, or distancing of these to existing ones...' (Thapar 2004: 340-341)

The idea of letting the texts speak for themselves was consistent with the sense of detachment that the colonialists sought to ensure in their mission in India.[84] Translation of texts written by Indians about how they ought to be governed was not seen as amounting to interference in their affairs. As Mia Carter notes, 'Jones's scholarship functioned as a double translation: a transcription of Sanskrit and Brahmanic codes into English, and a means of translating Hindu tradition into British legal discourse.'[85] (Harlow and Carter 2003: 249) However, these were abided by only in so far as they were not 'hurtful to authority of the government' and were overruled if their observance harmed British interests. (Roosa 1995: 140) Textualisation was the solution to the vexing problem the British faced of contending interpretations of Indian laws. Jones wrote that he could 'no longer bear to be at the mercy of our pundits who deal out Hindu law as they please, and make it at reasonable rates, when they cannot find it readymade.' (Jones 1804: 264) In a letter to Cornwallis, Jones wrote that the British should strive

> '...to assure the Hindu and Mussulman subjects of Great Britain, that the private laws which they severally held sacred, and a violation of which they would have thought the most grievous oppression, should not be superseded by a new system, of which they could have no knowledge, and which they must have considered as imposed on them by a spirit of rigour and intolerance.' (Jones 1804: 306)

As they saw it, the task of the British was emancipatory in nature. For the orientalists, this was achieved by reminding the Indians of their golden past that was forgotten, and for the Anglicists, their betterment meant the introduction of rational and superior laws and institutions of Britain. The familiar colonial concern with emancipation resurfaces in Jones' writings when he insists, 'I am conscious of desiring no advantage [in translating ancient texts], but the pleasure of doing general good.'(Jones 1804: 276)

[84] The objectives of the Company found clear articulation in Edmund Burke's arguments during the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1788. 'The Company in India does not exist as a nation. Nobody can go there that does not go in its service. Therefore the English nation in India is nothing but a seminary for the succession of officers. They are a nation of place-men.' (Carnall and Nicholson 2003: 148)

[85] The colonial privileging of the Brahmanical order did not translate into official patronage to Sanskrit. Indeed, the fate of the language during the colonial period was determined by two apparently contradictory measures which in different ways furthered the imaginary construct of Sanskrit as the repository of traditionalism. Sanskrit was suppressed within the colonial educational system by what Spivak called was an act of 'planned epistemic violence'. Simultaneous to this relegation was colonial privileging of the brahmanical order with regard to 'the performative use of Sanskrit.' In both cases, the colonisers reserved the right to determine and authenticate the exercise of what they deemed to be 'tradition'. (Spivak 1999: 229-230)

The writing of Indian history in the manner that upheld the ancient Hindu civilisation as the bearer of the original Indian identity had several significant implications. The Islamic empires that ruled India during the medieval period were seen as foreign impositions that suppressed and eclipsed the authentic Indian culture. Kratochwil argues that 'Textualisation of 'recollection' not only entails the 'closure' of what belongs to the tradition and what is apocryphal, but also...the 'purification' of the texts themselves, expunging from them what seems foreign or accidental'. (Kratochwil 2006: 20) The dichotomising of Indian history along communal lines that constructed narratives based on the categories of the native and the foreign can clearly be traced back to the colonial discourse.[86] As Thapar notes,

> '...Mill's *History of British India*...laid the foundation for a communal interpretation of Indian history and thus provided the historical justification for the two-nation theory. He was the first historian to develop the thesis of dividing Indian history into three periods which he called Hindu civilisation, Muslim civilisation and British civilisation....' (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 4)

The communal reading of Indian history is further confounded by the fact that no clear date exists when Islamic rule could be said to have commenced in the subcontinent. Whereas the standard interpretation pegs the milestone at around the eleventh century AD, historical evidence presents a vastly different picture. The advent of Muslim dynasties into India deviates from the conventional date not merely by decades but by entire centuries. While the Arabs ruled over Sind as early as in the eighth century and the Turks wrested control of part of northern India from the eleventh century onwards, Muslim domination in the Deccan was to follow three centuries later. (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 9) Contrary to the colonial assertion that religious consciousness was highly developed in India, texts dating to as late as the sixteenth century point to multiple layers of overlapping identities. Internal heterogeneity within Hinduism and Islam grew around diverse sects, lineages and schools prevented the coalescing of distinct religious

[86] The assertion that ancient India epitomised the Hindu age does not stand up to scrutiny since a number of emperors belonging to prominent dynasties such as the Mauryas and the Shakas were Buddhist by disposition. Furthermore, the very term Hindu did not exist in ancient India, and certainly the modern day connotations attached to the notion did not apply to the people and practices of that age. (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 7)

communities of the kind that the colonial historians affirmed had existed. (Metcalf 1995: 958; Rusen 2002)

The stress on texts as being representative of a country's eternal identity needs to be tempered with methodological issues in the realm of history of ideas. Texts should be contextualised in history to understand the import of their arguments rather than 'be treated as though they were interventions in timeless grand debates about perennial questions of justice, equality etc.'[87] (Keene 2005: 14)

*6. **Spiritual India***: With the colonial privileging of the Brahmanical interpretation of Hinduism, the religion came to be associated with spiritualism and idealism in contrast to the assumed rationalist and materialist approach of the West. It is true that at the level of epistemology, Hindu philosophy differs from the Western tradition. Whereas the Hindu tradition believes that knowledge can be attained by 'transcending immediate experience', Western philosophy relies on observation and inference to acquire knowledge. (Puchala 2003: 187) However, there existed a strong strand of materialism within Hindu philosophy that was morphed from Orientalist accounts on indigenous belief systems. As against the ritualistic representation favoured by Brahmanism, the order of Pancharatra Vaishnavism, which thrived for almost a millennium in north India till the thirteenth century, was firmly grounded in a realist philosophy. (Inden 2006: 213-15) Pancharatra Vaishnavism's emphasis on human agency and on the commission of acts as the prime determinant of the worth of an individual is noteworthy. It did not make a stark differentiation between good and evil since both are integral to human nature. According to the Pancharatras, evil and its causes belong to the world that we live in.[88] Evil was not perceived as an absolute entity external to the self, but was seen in relative terms as a 'lower self' that had to be conquered. Thus, the Pancharatra philosophy was

[87] The notion of the barbarian, for instance, was subject to different interpretations down history. It would be wrong to accord the cause of the inferior status of barbarians in ancient Greece to race. Black skin was not seen as a mark of inferiority. Their low social position was attributed to inferior linguistic capability, rather than poor social organisation, which went on to dominate accounts on barbarians in the nineteenth century. (Keene 2005: 20)

[88] All the complexities in social life are seen in terms of three forces that pervade the entire world. The inert forces of good (*sattva*) and bad (*tamas*) rely on the intervention of the third force, that of 'restless energy' (*rajas*) to translate into active forces of luminosity (*tejas*) or evil (*tamas*). (Inden 2006: 216, 218)

not geared toward the attainment of an idyllic state of 'pure' existence, since there never was one. (Inden 2006: 220-221)

A more radical strand was the lokayata philosophy which believed that 'Everything is confined/ limited...to the visible world'. (Inden 2006: 224) It signifies 'that which is prevalent among people' and 'that which is essentially this-worldly'. (Chattopadhyaya 1959: xvii) Lokayata was the ancient Indian philosophy of materialism that predated the advent of such concepts of spiritualism as God and Soul. In the fragments of the Lokayatikas that remain, the evolved line of argument that mounted the strongest attack on the Vedanta philosophy of idealism is evident. (Chattopadhyaya 1959: xvi-xvii; Sen 2001: 9) The Sensationalists, as they are called argued that neither do humans suffer the consequences of acts committed in their previous births, nor are there any enlightened states of existence after death towards which life should be oriented. What mattered was only that which could be perceived by the senses and therein lay the explanation to all phenomena and human action. (Inden 2006: 224; Raja 1967: 258) Clearly, the assumption of a spiritual collectivity that shunned and abhorred violence does not hold water in the case of India. As Thapar observes,

> '...Indian culture did not have a monopoly on spiritual content. The same characteristics as are associated with Indian spirituality can be found in many other ancient cultures and are frequently recognisable in traditional societies. Not surprisingly, the ancient Indians never saw themselves as more spiritual than their neighbours in adjoining or in far-away lands. Nor did visitors from other equally significant cultures, such as the Greeks, the Chinese and the Arabs notice any markedly distinctive spiritual characteristics.' (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 12)

The colonial claim that Indians were culturally attuned to spirituality is negated by the existence of rich literature that is materialist in orientation, Kalidasa's works being a classic instance. In Indian philosophy, the 'fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life', evident in the taxonomy of four aims namely *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* that provided a balance between the material and the spiritual motivations, and of which the last alone qualified for the purely spiritual. (Aurobindo 1967: 118) Thapar maintains that a '...distinction has to be maintained between non-violence as a philosophical concept and the practice of nonviolence. There is very little evidence to suggest that in practice violence was avoided.' (Thapar *et al.* 1969: 13) Hindu theorisations enumerate

four strategies that the king is to wield for effective control- *sama* (consensus), *bheda* (dissensus), *dana* (material gratification) and *danda* (punishment through coercion). As Inden notes,

> 'The concept of *danda* is of central importance to the Hindu theory of political community, for *danda*, the 'rod of force', coercion, or, punishment was the central element, that is, the particular form of power that distinguished the kingly role from other roles.' (Inden 1998: 51)

That the term *danda* was used to refer both to the power to punish and to the king's army goes on to underline the coercive powers that were at the disposal of the ruler. Interestingly, non-violence or *ahimsa*, hailed as the hallmark of Hinduism was first upheld as a central tenet of religious discourse by Buddhism and Jainism. (Thapar 2004: 344)

That Indians were attuned to strategic matters that concerned their security is amply demonstrated by Tipu Sultan's concerted efforts to militarily upgrade his army. Mysore under Tipu, and the Maratha Confederacy embarked on the process of military modernisation to counter the challenge of the East India Company. Tipu took keen interest in modernising his army along European lines and for that he elicited the support of European blacksmiths to manufacture muskets and guns for him. Eventually, Tipu's efforts yielded a limited military revolution in Mysore that sought to attain self sufficiency in terms of armaments for his army.[89] However, despite the limitations which included his inability to regularise training in Western technology through the institution of training academies of the kind that Czarist Russia initiated in the eighteenth century, Tipu managed to blunt the military advantage that the British had wielded over the production and deployment of small arms. (Roy 2004: 30)

Historical evidence points to the existence of a pronounced and developed strand of materialist philosophy in India. Its neglect within colonial literature led to the conflation of Indian philosophy with spiritualism and idealism, an association that is yet to be seriously challenged within the genre of IR writings on India. Another issue in

[89] The rockets produced by Tipu and deployed against the British in the Third Anglo-Mysore War of 1790-92 were of such high quality that the British ordered their detailed examination for future reference after Tipu's death. (Roy 2004: 24) Despite his efforts at being self-sufficient in the production of military hardware, Tipu's dependence on European soldiers and craftsmen continued, making the modernisation process a capital intensive one.

which the need for a critical approach is sorely felt concerns the Indian understanding of time, which during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was a vital cog in the colonial thesis on the absence of historical progress in India.

7. ***Linear notion of time***: Orientalism threw up certain other images of India from which extrapolations about Indian strategic approach are made. For instance, the Indian notion of time was believed to be wholly cyclic rather than linear. Whereas linear time of the Judaeo-Christian tradition was believed to have a beginning and an end and allowed for the progress of history through the passing of non-recurring events, cyclic time saw no such progression as events repeated themselves with regularity. Judaism's notion of the omnipotent God as the creator of the entire human race facilitated the formulation of universal history.[90] Christianity inherited this understanding that the entire humanity was collectively progressing towards a particular *telos*, the Day of Judgment. The notion that the course of history was rendered meaningful by its progression towards this ultimate objective determined the concept of linear time in the Judeo-Christian tradition, unlike the Greek and Hindu conception of cyclical time.[91] (Thapar 1996: 4-9; Yurdusev 2003: 40-42)

Jones' work on ancient Indian texts led him to remark in resignation, 'We are lost in an inextricable labyrinth of imaginary astronomical cycles, *Yugas, Mahayugas, Calpas*, and *Menwantaras*'. (Jones 2003: 262, emphasis original) This understanding of the Indian sense of time yielded the argument that since time has no beginning or end, Indians have no past, present or future, i.e. they have no sense of *history*. Mill believed that in order to civilise Indians, it was necessary to 'push them into history', an opinion

[90] The Western tradition drew on two key ideas from the Judaeo-Christian philosophy- the idea of 'creation out of nothing and the conception of a linear temporal order.' The philosophy provided the 'unique point of origin', a particular temporal juncture from which linear time could be said to have begun. In contrast to the above philosophy, Indian tradition did not uphold the idea of 'no pre-existing cause' behind creation. (Mohanty 1992: 18-19)

[91] Thapar rejects the view that linear and cyclic times are polar opposites, arguing instead that both can coexist, as they did in ancient India. The progress of linear time is suggested in the sequential ordering of two major events alluded to in the texts, namely the great flood which Manu survived to become the progenitor of the Suryavamsa and Candravamsa clans, and the epic war in the *Mahabharata* in which these families eventually perish. The *Visnu Purana* offers genealogical details of the Suryavamsa and Candravamsa families, which later aspirants of power claimed to have descended from. (Thapar 2000a: 163-167)

that was aptly echoed by A. MacDonnel in *A History of Sanskrit Literature* in which he asserted that 'early India wrote no history because it never made any'. (Woodrow 1862; Thapar 2000a: 156) Jones further lamented, 'so clouded are the old history and chronology of *India* with fables and allegories' that an authentic account of the country's history was impossible. (Jones 2003: 262) Moreover, it was believed that human intervention could do little to alter the course of the immense cycles of time that were destined to recur.[92] Once again, Indians were denied the power of agency to control, plan and strategise as they willed.

There are two key arguments discernible here. One was the assertion that in a static society like India, there were no developments that could be regarded as historical changes. That is, there were no points in history against which the progression of time could be measured. Since history was meant to record changes, the assertion that Indian history was an endless tract of stasis and stagnation dispensed with the need to justify the present rule in terms of a historical past that never existed in the first place. (Thapar 2000a: 158) The prevalent imagery of India in the colonial schema, Uday Mehta observes, was one of

> '...a vacant field, already weeded, where history has been brought to a nullity and where extant social and political practices are narrowly contained, or altogether absent, primed for reform and constructive efforts.' (Mehta 1999: 11-12)

Ancient history was anything but static and this is borne out in the writings of historians such as D.D. Kosambi. That societies were differently organised in different periods of time is itself an indication that major changes were occurring in Indian history. (Thapar 2000a: 162) Urbanisation in the Indus was later followed by the formation of chiefdoms (*mahajanapadas*) which were eventually taken over by extensive empires such as the Mauryan empire. Another indicator that Indians were cognisant of the passage of time is its well developed calendar system. As early as the sixth century BC, Indians acquired the knowledge of calendars from Mesopotamia. The Vedas, believed to have

[92] Indian calendars distinguished between current and elapsed years, whereas the West did not recognise the latter as a viable temporal category. A reason for the apparent irrationality of Indian time-keeping was the complexities in the Indian calendar system. Solar calendars contain variations that factor in the location of the observer and the position of the sun. However, valid calculations of time could be made on the basis of existing tables, taking into account such contingencies. (Richards 1998: 176-177)

been composed around 1500 BC contained a 12-month calendar of 30 days each. Thus, very early in history, Indians learnt to live by linear time. As many as 20 calendars were followed in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Richards 1998: 172-173)

Secondly, knowledge in India has historically been preserved and sustained through oral traditions. The introduction of literacy meant the structuring and systematisation of that knowledge into texts, though oral means of communicating the same continued for long periods of time. Reliance on one means of preserving the past did not signal the redundancy of the other although a gradual shift was perceptible.[93] The Orientalist search for manuscripts suggested the underlying emphasis on texts as the sole source of history. Oral traditions as a mode of preserving the past were not seen as a mark of a historically conscious society. Vinay Lal gives an alternative interpretation to the relative lack of historical works, attributing it to 'purposeful forgetfulness' on the part of Indians.[94]

> 'Modern man thinks of history as an aid to living in the present, but to the Indian history has the contrary effect of not enabling one to live in the present. Each civilization must find its way to eliminating the suffering that is born of existential dilemmas, of decay from within, and of oppression from within and without; and the latter was, one can perhaps speculate, best achieved by a *wilful amnesia*.' (Lal 2003: 59, emphasis original; see also Das 1967: 123).

There is a reason more fundamental than 'wilful amnesia' brought on the trauma of suffering that explains the apparent absence of historical works. The domains of literary and historical writings often overlapped, a classic example of which would be the epic *Ramayana*, regarded not only as the first literary work in Sanskrit (*adikavya*) but

[93] However, there was a bifurcation of the oral tradition in India where on the one hand, the priestly class ensured the scrupulous conservation of the Vedic hymns and on the other, wandering bards narrated informal compositions that were later collated in a written format as the epics, i.e. the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The eventual codification of the hymns into the *Vedas* did not mark the end of its oral transference, as the continued emphasis was on the precise pronunciation of the hymn, failing which the entire recitation was deemed futile. For instance, the *guru-shishya parampara*, erected on the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, was originally an oral tradition that came to be increasingly mediated by written texts. (Thapar 2000a: 196-199)

[94] Roy Perrett argues that the paucity of historical works was on account of the nature of Indian epistemology, which did not regard history or memory as independent knowledge sources. 'Real' knowledge was that which led the individual to *moksha*, and in that sense, was liberating. Historical knowledge was hence not valued for its inability to promote *moksha*. (Perrett 1999: 320)

also as a text in history (*itihasa*). (Busch 2005: 34) The literary method of recording history was a well developed genre in India, and offers us valuable insights into the social context and perceptions of political power. The *itihasa-purana* tradition, referring to 'that which was believed to have happened in the past', contained elements of historical thinking which the British found Indians to be lacking in. The tradition, employing both the cyclic and linear notions of time, was in evidence in a variety of sources. Spans of linear time existed as 'fragmentary arcs within the cycle'. Within large time cycles or *yugas*, the lineages of ruling families were arranged in linear progression. Subsequent texts moved over from using generations as marking the progress of time, to regnal years that recorded the durations of royal dynasties. Edicts of Ashoka in third century BC record regnal years and important events as occurring at specific points in time. As Thapar notes,

> 'Time as a cycle does not eliminate the past and the future, since the cycle terminates in destruction and a new cycle follows. The inordinate length of the cosmological time cycle is to underline the idea of timelessness.... Only later does a different, generationally measured time, under human control come into historical reckoning. Implicit in this is also a distinction between the history of the universe viewed in an infinity of time and the history of man which was subject to exact measurement.' (Thapar 2000a: 737)

From the seventh century AD, biographical accounts of rulers became the means of recording events, *Harsacarita* by Banabhatta being a case in point. These biographical accounts traced dynasties of rulers, suggesting a sense of linear time. (Thapar 1996: 31-37) From the tenth century onwards, *vamsavalis* that trace the ancestry of ruling families, detailing the region concerned through records and inscriptions, became the popular mode of preserving the line of succession. The strong literary mode in India led Busch to observe that

> 'South Asia in particular has been a fertile site for investigating alternative modes of processing and producing history....India did not fail to become a historical society: it is a differently-historical one.' (Busch 2005: 33)

The *itihasa-purana* tradition which survived the invasion of the Afghans and the Mughals came to an end with the advent of the British who brought with them new approaches to historiography. (Thapar 2000a: 163-167)

Interestingly, medieval German and Indian writings display a striking similarity in terms of historical consciousness. Both societies regarded the medieval period to be the ultimate stage in the progression of cosmological time. While Europe readied itself for the impending arrival of the anti-Christ, India anticipated the commencement of the last of the four cycles, the *Kaliyuga* in the age they lived.[95] (Kulke 1993: 31) As Buddha Prakash argues, according to the Hindu philosophy of history

> '...the duration of the ages is not chronologically immutable but rather depends upon the actions and character of the people....History is a collective and impersonal process according to the Hindu view of life....Hence it follows that when the people as a whole are active, it is the 'age of activity', when they are not active and lapse into inertia, it is an 'age of sleep'; and when they again become active and shake off their inertia, it is an 'age of awakening'.' (Prakash 1967: 28-29)

The notion of cyclic Indian time and was central to the colonial discourse for its potency. The lack of historical progression implied stagnation that was typical of traditional societies. The inevitable recurrence of massive time cycles made human intervention in changing the course of events appear a futile exercise. As van der Veer notes, 'History is a sign of the nation-sate, of modernity as much as the denial of history is a sign of the colony, of tradition.' (Veer 2001: 4) Thus, the denial of agency to Indians also implied the denia! of the power to strategise and to act. India's strategic history in every sense was believed to have effectively commenced with the purposeful thrust of colonialism.

Warfare and Diplomacy in Ancient India

An essential aspect towards understanding the nature of India's strategic practice is the approach classical India adopted towards warfare and diplomacy. A disclaimer at this juncture is necessary in order to clarify that the attempt here is not to trace the 'native' or 'indigenous' theorisations on statecraft before the 'disruptions' caused by external invasions followed. As with any other country, these invasions brought with them diverse ways of thinking about war and peace, thereby contributing to the evolution of strategic thinking in the subcontinent. However, this is not to discount the importance of

[95] The texts in question were written by Bishop Otto von Freising near Munich in 1146, and by Kalhana in Kashmir in the same year.

theorisations that existed in ancient India. As Adam Watson asserts, 'No system of diverse states and peoples developed a greater sophistication in ancient times than that of India.' (Watson 1992: 77) Although many of the ideas prevalent then may be lost in contemporary times, they would serve as a useful beginning towards theorising about strategic practice in India. This may necessarily involve referring to ancient Sanskrit texts that are popularly regarded as Hindu scriptures, and the genre is often termed the Hindu tradition of warfare.

The ancient tradition has displayed a parallel Indian engagement with both heroism and prudence. It is the dynamics between the two traditions that shaped the ethics of war in ancient India. The almost simultaneous interest in contrasting types is evident in the growth of both the *dharmashastra* and the *arthshastra* literatures. Whereas the former stresses on the ethical behaviour expected of a king, the latter serves as injunctions to the ruler regarding the conduct of statecraft. The dichotomy between the two traditions is reflected in the contrasting genres of literature that contained these ideas. Whereas the tradition stressing on dharma was chiefly located in epic literature, the genre of writing emphasising prudence found expression in the literature on statecraft. (Brekke 2006: 138)

Unlike the Christian tradition which was specifically engaged with the just war theory, the *dharmashastra* tradition believed that the ethics on warfare were informed by the duties of the ruler, and as such were part of the larger scheme of *rajadharma*. The enlightened ruler who was aware of the ethical dimensions of violence was endowed with divine attributes that enabled him to wield his power to wage war with discretion. The king in India was an extension of God and as such was bestowed with the attributes of the divine cosmos.[96] His authority was not derived from an extraneous source as the case was in Europe, where the ruler possessed divine right only when he was so blessed by God. The rationale behind vesting warfare with the significance of the duties of kingship rests on the concept of *karmayoga*. *Karmayoga* elevates the status of warfare to a sacrifice that

[96] Manu articulated the divine authority of the king, 'For when this world was without a king and people ran about in all directions out of fear, The Lord emitted a king in order to guard his entire (realm), taking lasting elements from Indra, the Wind, Yama, the Sun, Fire, Varuna, the Moon, and (Kubera) the Lord of Wealth. Because a king is made from particles of these lords of the gods, therefore he surpasses all living beings in brilliant energy, and, like the Sun, he burns eyes and hearts, and no one on earth is able even to look at him'. (Cited in Brekke 2006: 116)

is expected of a virtuous ruler. The *Mahabharata* saw the war as a sacrificial act (*yuddhayagna*), aspects of which were comparable to those of a conventional sacrifice. (Brekke 2006: 115) The constraints on the power of the king were in some senses, unique to the Indian notion of kingship itself.

Notwithstanding the duality of power in terms of the temporal and the religious domains in the Christian and Muslim world, both realms were located within the same social sphere.. In contrast, the Indian theory restricts the authority of the king by postulating another separate sphere over which he has little control but which legitimised his divine status in the temporal realm- the sphere of renunciation. The *brahmin*, by renouncing the social sphere stands independent of it, because of which his sphere lies beyond the grasp of the king.[97] The contradiction between the circumscribed powers of the king and the stricture that he has the final word on matters of dharma can be explained in terms of the amorphous nature of dharma itself. Howsoever great its appeal, the application and observance of dharma required the institutionalised support of an organisational apparatus, which the king alone could provide. (Heesterman 1998: 18-22)

As opposed to the *dharmashastra* literature which supported divine kingship, the *arthashastra* tradition upheld the theory of contractual kingship. Since kingship in this case was not concerned with divinity, the power to wage war was released from the logic of *dharma* and the attendant duties expected of the virtuous king. As Watson points out, for Kautilya

> '...the end of power was not the service of the gods or an ideology, but the happiness of the state. He believed...that a multitude of independencies was not the most desirable state of affairs, and that on the contrary greater happiness could be attained by establishing a benevolent imperial rule. It is curious that from the *Arthashastra* to the American Declaration of Independence (which opposes imperial rule) no other text puts the pursuit of happiness quite so high.' (Watson 1992: 83)

Consequently, war was not a sacrificial act validated by just means and honourable intentions, but was one of the many means available to the king to achieve other ends.

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[97] Before the *asvamedha* ritual sacrifice commences, the king and the *brahmin* ritually exchange their qualities. The king temporarily forsakes his royalty to the *brahmin* who in turn bequeaths him with his power of *brahmin*hood. The symbolic alternation enables the king to withdraw to a life in the wilderness befitting an ascetic, while the *brahmin* assumes charge of the temporal sphere. (Heesterman 1998: 33-34)

The tradition stresses on resorting to war in order to attain objectives such as security. According to Kautilya, '*Artha* is the source of the livelihood of human beings, in other words, the earth inhabited by men. The science which is the means of the attainment and protection of that earth is the *Arthashastra.*' (Kautilya 1923: 1-2) The *arthashastra* tradition is a rich body of literature comprising of not only Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, but also Kamandaki's *Nitisara* and the *Barhaspatya Sutra* which stressed more on the outcome that justified the use of unethical means. The *Ramayana* too can be classified as a postulation of the *arthashastra* tradition, evident in the 6000 references to military action that one can locate in the epic. The taxonomy of military strategies of conciliation, bribery, sowing dissension and coercion in the *Ramayana* coincide with the broader classification arrived at by Kautilya. (Brekke 2006: 118)

A notable work in IR theory that studies the specificities of the ancient Indian system is Watson's *The Evolution of International Society*. For Watson, ancient India presented a classic example of the moves states made to escape the anarchy of multiple political independencies that existed during that time. To a great extent, the Mauryan empire that was 'a patchwork quilt of independent and dependent communities' held together because of the collective awareness 'that the welfare and expansion, and indeed the survival, of a state depended on its relations with its neighbours. In this inescapable net, rules and institutions developed, shaped by the Hindu cultural tradition.' Watson identifies the essence of the Hindu tradition as lying in its abiding injunction 'that a ruler should not disturb the customs and laws of a subject community.' However, Watson's equation of ancient India with Hinduism is questionable ('Hinduism in its many variants is one of the major civilizations of mankind'), as is his assumption that 'the Hindu tradition' was characterised by 'a strong sense of a common civilization [that] distinguished Hindu Indians from other peoples.' (Watson 1992: 77-78)

He selects Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as the representative text of the period to emphasise the level of sophistication ancient Indians achieved in devising strategies to manage inter-state relations. Kautilya's prescription for coping with the system lay in the establishment of an imperial order and not in securing peace through a cooperative arrangement arrived at by independent states. Watson hails the *Arthashastra* for being a 'major theoretical analysis of international relations as an integral part of the problems of

statecraft', a fusion unparalleled in contemporary history. (Watson 1992: 79) Watson locates the ancient work within a comparative framework noting,

> 'But when we remember that the Greeks, who produced such outstanding analyses of the domestic government of a state, wrote nothing comparable about a state's foreign relations or about the working of their international system, we realize the importance of this pioneering Indian achievement.' (Watson 1992: 79)

Kautilya's unit of analysis was the circle of states consisting of twelve primary kings around which he builds an elaborate network of potential alliances that would optimise the chances of expansion for the conqueror. The classical Indian texts mention the king as merely one of the 72 elements that comprise the 'circle of kings'. As Heesterman observes, 'The circle doctrine is a schematic representation of a universe made up of various interlocking forces, where the king has to stake himself in an ever-continuing gamble with his likes as well as with other forces.' (Heesterman 1998: 20) The notable point was that all states in Kautilya's schema operated within the dynamics of the contemporary international system and as such an independent state was inconceivable. He also distinguishes between the mediatory king (*madhyama*) and the neutral king (*udasina*) on the basis of which he extensively discusses measures to tackle the manoeuvres of the more immediate mediatory ruler. Watson singles out this distinction as a sign of political sophistication achieved by Kautilya, which

> '...may be the first instance in a text of the concept of neutrality, and of the steps which a conqueror or someone resisting conquest should adopt towards a neutral state. No such distinctions between a mediatory and a neutral power are to be found in the writings of the near east or Greece; and the European system rarely got beyond allies, enemies and neutrals.'[98] (Watson 1992: 81)

The realist tenor in Kautilya also surfaces in his emphasis on expediency which often entailed winning the support and confidence of conquered people. Kautilya upholds peace over war and even neutrality as it entailed the most judicious and efficient use of state resources possible. However, every state even in peacetime should be prepared for war and for which no means were to be spared. Kautilya's schema allowed for

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[98] Mediatory king was one whose territory lay close to both the conqueror and his immediate enemy and who was noncommittal but powerful enough to determine the balance of power within the circle of states. The territory of the neutral king lay beyond this primary set of kings, but who was also sufficiently powerful to either resist or assist the conqueror, his enemy and the mediatory king. (Watson 1992: 80)

considerable degrees of local autonomy as his advice to the conqueror was to leave local power structures undisturbed in order to facilitate a peaceful transition.

The decline in the use of military strategies, restraint and prudence in war, and the dominance of the notion of chivalry that extolled death in war, are regarded by some researchers as the causes behind the inability of Hindus to effectively oppose the invading Muslim armies. However, the tradition of prudence was not altogether overshadowed by the *dharmashatra* literature in the Middle Ages. Somadeva Suri, a Jain teacher upheld prudence over heroism in his work, *Yashastilaka*. The notion of treacherous warfare (*kutayuddha*), which is denounced in the *dharmashastra* literature as unethical is upheld by Somadeva, and is indeed one of the underlying principles of the *arthashastra* theory. (Brekke 2006: 135)

In the continuum of kingship that at one end attributes independent divine qualities to the king as in ancient Egypt, and on the other regards him as a worldly instrument of the divine force as in ancient China and medieval Europe, the position of the Hindu king falls in the middle. He is to submit to the writ of dharma and at the same time, preside over his kingdom as its supreme power. In order to comprehend the position of the king in the political system, it is essential to understand that his kingdom was seen as a microcosm of the grand cosmic order. The Cosmic Man who generates the universe and into whom all its elements return to be regenerated again in cyclic alternation, also creates the king with portions taken from the eight deities of the cosmos. Constituted with the radiance and power of the cosmos, the divinity of the Hindu king is inherent in his person and not bestowed by divine right as in medieval European philosophy. The centrality of the Cosmic Man within the cosmos is replicated in the king who is the font of power, order and creation within his kingdom. Within this interpretive framework, the claims of Hindu kings over a universal dominion can be understood because the kingdom was seen as containing within it all the elements of the entire earth. (Inden 1998: 46-50)

The necessity for the regulation of human affairs is recognised by both the Hindu and Islamic traditions. However, the two traditions differed on the status and authority of the king with regard to his kingdom. The Hindu tradition vested the king with the divinity drawn from the gods that energised him to in turn revitalise the various elements of his kingdom. This replication of the cosmic power in the person is absent in Islamic thought

which instead chooses to remind the king of his instrumental status in the scheme of things. Peter Hardy observes of the Islamic tradition, 'It is not by reason of his being, but by reason of his behaviour, that the sultan becomes the means whereby subjects enjoy welfare. The real agent is god.' (Hardy 1998: 228) Hence, the authority of the king is vested in him by god whose divine attributes cannot be replicated in any of his creations and hence no mortal being can aspire to reflect his powers in this temporal world. The eleventh and twelfth century invasions into India affected the formulations in both Hindu and Islamic theories of state. For instance, the learned of both traditions accepted the new claimants to power without questioning their social background or the basis of their claim. Instead, they chose to stress on the appropriate exercise of power notwithstanding the means through which it had been acquired. (Hardy 1998: 222-225)

CARICATURES IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Patterns in strategic practice of a country emerge when it is theorised, and as is mostly the case, theorisations are prone to varying interpretations. Although India is no exception to this norm, its case presents us with an interesting interface between theory and history. Precisely because the subjects under focus were so varied, the colonial scholarship was critical in moulding the Indian self-image. Many of the assumptions and images of India that were arrived at centuries ago persist and continue to be reinforced in contemporary writings, as we shall see subsequently. Within the field of IR, particularly in writings that attempted to give a cultural slant to India's influence, the approach towards the constructed colonial images have remained largely uncritical. It is evident in the literature pertaining to the area that the historical and cultural context itself has been 'objectified' to simply 'substitute specific cultural contexts for universals'. (Lawson 2006: 25) Given that the self-image of a country informs the role it would envision for itself in the world arena, the study of its historical evolution becomes imperative. The popular cultural images of India as the exotic land of bygone glories and of a fractious society caught in a time warp can be traced to the western colonial imagination and the nationalist writings it spurred in response.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a continued intellectual preoccupation of Indian nationalists with India's past that ultimately led to what Cohn calls 'the

objectification of Indian culture'. Facets of it were singled out to authenticate and justify the national cause, as Gandhi did with the concept of *ahimsa* to great effect. Likewise, the Gita's permissive use of violence for a just cause was interpreted by the nationalists to justify the national movement. (Cohn 2004: 229) For Aurobindo Ghosh, India had

> 'developed the spiritual mind working upon the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the dharma informed by the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite.' (Cited in Chandra 1969: 43)

Indeed, the British turned out to be vociferous supporters of the nationalist claim over spirituality since it left them with the responsibility to undertake and control the mundane material responsibilities of administration. Nehru regarded the recourse to past glory and spiritual greatness as 'a foolish and dangerous pastime', since the willing withdrawal of the Indians from worldly concerns on the belief that they were better suited for spiritual pursuits absolved the colonialists of the responsibility to explain their intervention. (Nehru 1982: 81) Hence, although the exigencies of time prompted the intellectuals in Bengal and elsewhere to turn to Indian history, it entailed a selective reading of it so as to project the image of a composite national culture. An instance of westernisation in colonial India was the Bengal Renaissance during the nineteenth century, which was a response to the call for cleansing Hinduism of its superstitious practices and irrationalism.[99] The purpose was to 'purify' Hinduism to the extent that it could be integrated with Western notions of rationality, monotheism and empiricism.[100] Underlying the concerted effort on part of the intellectuals to glorify India's past was the aim of making Indian civilisation comparable to that of the West. (Cohn 2004: 225-227) The challenge of making the two compatible continued to confound some of the best minds of the day. Nehru for instance noted,

[99] Partha Chatterjee located the early articulations of nationalist historiography that stressed on 'ancient glory, present misery' in nineteenth century Bengali texts. (Chatterjee 1995: 117)

[100] These existed alongside derogatory images of the West that spawned two distinct strands of Asian consciousness, namely the 'national-political' and the 'transcendental-cultural'. Whereas the former was driven by nationalist sentiments, the latter mounted a cultural attack on the West. Cultural Asianists like Tagore saw the East as spiritually superior to the West, which was marked by a mechanical and technical approach to progress. (Bonnett 2001: 81-86)

> 'I have become a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place elsewhere, at home nowhere...They are both part of me, and , though they help me in both the East and the West, they also create in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness... I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling'. (Nehru 1941: 353)

The search for timeless essences and continuing traditions did not end with decolonisation. The growing profile of the US led to a spurt in area studies programmes as its endeavour to know more about the world, especially the Third World was institutionalised. In its effort to expand its links, the dilemma before the US was how to ensure that the indigenous political elite could simultaneously straddle the spheres of tradition and modernity. The Comparative Civilisations Project from 1951 to 1961 grappled with this challenge of how civilisations holding on to age-old traditions could modernise. The University of Chicago was the first to emerge as the seat of Indian studies in the US. (Roosa 1995: 152-153) The Committee for Comparative Study of New Nations, set up under the chairmanship of Edward Shils in 1959, recommended that the imperative of modernisation would have to override concern for tradition. Yet, the indigenous elite would maintain the exalted status of 'sacred centres' with which the masses would identify during times of transition. Milton Singer, who was involved with the Chicago project, argued that India's 'sacred centre' was its ancient 'Sanskritic tradition'. The Chicago project was basically driven by the same concerns that occupied the minds of the Orientalists- to uncover an underlying tradition that would draw divergent cultural strands into one composite Indian culture. To this end, M.N. Srinivas's model of Sanskritisation suited the search for a unifying tradition in India. Srinivas argued that lower castes sought to gain greater acceptance within the caste system by 'Sanskritising' themselves through emulation. Thus, the caste system became the unifying strand that connected the lower with the higher castes, and came to symbolise the composite culture of India to the Chicago anthropologists. (Roosa 1995: 153-154) Roosa notes that in this manner,

> '...the Chicago anthropologists encouraged the continuation of the Hindu tradition. They reinstated the Orientalist definition of Indian civilization as Hindu civilization and excluded all inconsistencies and historical changes. The 'Indian' conceived as the singular timeless essence was accorded great respect, while vast

reality incompatible with their model of 'Hindu mind' was dismissed from consideration'. (Roosa 1995: 154)

Societalism, which is the process of reducing political, economic and religious phenomena to the social phenomena, upon which orientalist writings were based, continues to dominate contemporary literature. (Gelber 2001: 11) Stephen Rosen, in his attempt to study the influence of domestic social structures on the military effectiveness of states, selected caste as the institution having an enduring influence on Indian military power from the ancient period to the modern era. The book's central argument is that caste divisions which were duly reflected in Indian armies down ages weakened their military prowess. Satisfied with caste as an 'objective' criterion, Rosen adopts an excessively deterministic view of Indian strategic practice. He asserts, 'Though other social divisions [religious, regional and linguistic] may be overlaid on the system of caste relations, they do not have the same profound impact on day-to-day life...' to the extent that religious divisions have become 'caste-ified.'[101] (Rosen 1996: 33-34)

George Tanham similarly regards caste as the 'bedrock' of Indian society which 'tends to foster a conservative and non-innovative mind-set...' (Tanham 1996: 42) In the same vein, John Hall argues that the caste system provides the overarching template within which the entire Indian history can be explained. Introducing India as 'The Land of the Brahmans' in his book *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West*, Hall asserts that Brahmanism 'blocked the emergence of powerful polities' in India, because of which 'India did not have a political *history*'[102] (Cited in Blaut 2000: 133, emphasis original). Hall's approach echoes what Hegel had asserted centuries ago about the 'prehistorical' nature of the spread of Indian culture, which 'is only a dumb, deedless expansion; that is, it presents no political action. The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished

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[101] The misrepresentation of India as a Hindu entity is evident from Rosen's argument, 'India is Hindu and Hindus think differently from non-Hindus' before proceeding to a psycho-analytic study of the 'Hindu personality'. (Rosen 1996: 39-41)

[102] For Hall, the absence of political traditions accounted for long periods of statelessness and chaos in India. Blaut notes that while Hall regards the lack of a strong state in India as a sign of political weakness, the absence of absolute imperialism in Europe's history becomes a laudable trait. (Blaut 2000: 134)

themselves.' (Hegel 2003: 222, emphasis original) Yet another contemporary reflection of Orientalist caricatures is provided by Barbara Crosette who argues,

> 'the [Indian] tendency toward moral relativism and a concurrent Hindu disinclination to take a rigorous individual stand on issues can lead to an unnecessary lack of self-confidence at national level for a country of this size....Wild allegations and abstractions are hurdled around and sanctimonious speeches made, but concrete proposals or rational analyses rarely follow. (Crosette 1993: 11)

Perhaps no other work on Indian strategic thought incorporates orientalist images of India more completely and makes their strategic significance more evident than Tanham's essay on Indian strategic thought. (Tanham 1996) Tanham, in attempting a cultural interpretation takes Hinduism and its caste system to be appropriate representations of Indian culture. Indians, according to him, with their faith in *dharma*, *karma* and transmigration, nurture 'a passive, almost fatalistic acceptance of life'.[103] The belief in pre-ordained repetition of cycles makes future 'less subject to human manipulation than it does to a Westerner'. He further adds,

> 'Rational analysis, so vital to Western societies, has less influence in Indian society as so many other factors play important or dominant roles. The acceptance of life as a mystery and the inability to manipulate events impedes preparation for the future in all areas of life, including the strategic.' (Tanham 1996: 43)

The import such an assumption carries for strategic affairs is worth noting, as Indians are depicted as being culturally and historically incapable of planning and strategising. Tanham states,

> '...the Hindu concept of time or rather the lack of a sense of time—Indians view life as an eternal present, with neither history nor future—discourages planning.... Hindus consider life a mystery, largely unknowable and not entirely under man's control. In this view, fate, intuition, tradition and emotions play important roles, but how, how much, and when is never clearly known. Man's control over his life is thus limited in Hindu eyes, and he cannot forecast or plan with any confidence.' (Tanham 1996: 73)

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[103] Tanham's opinion is echoed by Brahma Chellaney who similarly alludes to 'the placidly pacifist Hindus and Jains' along with 'complacent Buddhists' in order to reiterate his argument on the tolerant and peace loving nature of Asians. (Chellaney 2006: 68)

The caricature of a defensive India lacking in strategic thought is reinforced by the contrasting Western case, 'which assume(s) a faith in logic and human progress, the efficacy of individual efforts, a sense of history and continuity, and a future to be shaped and worked for.' (Tanham 1996: 43) Tanham argues that the defensive approach is the enduring feature of India's strategic culture and is reflected in its foreign policy in the modern era, as in the earlier periods. Reinforcing the set representations on India, he concludes that 'the forces of culture and history and the attitude and policies of the independent Indian government have worked against the concept of strategic thinking and planning.' (Tanham 1996: 75) What is interesting is that in the commentaries that follow Tanham's essays, many of these cultural caricatures of India go unchallenged. For instance, while scholars take issue with Tanham on the tenacity and orientation of India's strategic thinking, the familiar motifs of caste and a society caught in a time-warp remain unquestioned.[104]

Studies seeking to refute claims of a defensive India also succumb to the tendency of delineating identifiable attributes that have survived the ravages of history, in this case of an essentially realist approach. In making a case for a culturally militaristic Indian outlook, Bharat Karnad locates its essence in certain key ancient texts such as the *Arthashastra*, *Manusmriti* and the *Vedas*. He contests the view that Indians are a culturally defensive people who shirk the use of force, arguing that the texts offer the ruler a range of options that culminate in open war. For Karnad, Indian strategic thinking is characterised by pragmatism that can be traced back to the ancient period. History has reiterated the innate Indian proclivity to be calculative and strategise, and in its progress down millennia, the medieval era is reduced to being 'the Muslim interregnum' that bridged the ancient and the colonial periods. The contribution of medieval rulers was

[104] Tanham employs another stereotype to drive home the point that Indians are not programmed to strategise. He argues that the unchanging agricultural cycles inhibited planning which ultimately influenced the mind-set of the Indian political elite. He asserted, 'Like most rural people, Indian farmers have no tradition or understanding of long-range planning....The peasant psyche remains important, however, as many of today's leaders come from the rural areas of India.' The cliché once again receives no critical mention from the other commentators. (Tanham 1996: 81)

restricted to changes at the tactical and strategic level, whereas the already established grand strategic framework remained intact.[105] (Karnad 2002: 23-24)

Andrew Latham contends that the realpolitik tradition of strategising was introduced in India by the British, and coupled with the realist streak in the 'Kautilyan tradition', it led the Indians to conceptualise security in 'essentially unilateral terms', as opposed to the Western notion of 'mutual' security during the Cold War. In India's case, both traditions emphasised the greatness of the dominant power to which smaller states were expected to submit. One of the vestiges of the Raj tradition was the formulation of security in terms of the defence of the 'natural' frontiers of the subcontinent. Furthermore, this rationale becomes the basis of the Indian concern with all security issues that fall within this naturally demarcated territory, namely South Asia. (Latham 1999: 137, 140) However, Latham cautions that

> '...it is important to recognize that India's security culture is not transhistorical, either in the sense that it can be traced back to some 'authentic' pre-colonial tradition or that it is timeless, immutable and unchanging. In the Indian context, security culture is a contested discourse, embattled on the one hand by transnational cultural and political forces, and on the other by indigenous critiques of the security policies of the Indian state.' (Latham 1999: 132)

Despite assertions that the Indian security culture cannot be 'traced back to some 'authentic' pre-colonial tradition', Latham sets out to explore the '[e]ffects of Hindu Norms on Foreign Policy Style'.[106] (Latham 1999: 146) Not surprisingly, the familiar Tanhamian interpretation of Indian culture is adopted, emphasising as it does on its hierarchical understanding of international power relations stemming from the ubiquitous caste system. Furthermore, the Hindu concepts of Karma and fate allow Indians to accept 'inconsistencies and contradictions' that trouble the Westerners. (Latham 1999: 147)

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[105] Orientalism fostered the notion of the effeminate Hindu subjugated by the aggressive Muslim invader, giving rise to the perception that the medieval period contributed little to the evolution of strategic thinking in India. A sophisticated presentation of this idea can be found in Jaswant Singh's *Defending India*. Singh argues that despite 'an accommodative and forgiving Hindu milieu... Islamic conquest of just parts of India needed many centuries of strife. Despite the earlier Delhi Sultanates, the Vijayanagar Empire flowered in the south'. Termed as 'achievements' during the medieval period, Singh's pitting of Hindu rulers against their Islamic counterparts is apparent. (Singh 2001: 14)

[106] Latham goes to the extent of asserting that the Kautilyan tradition prevents Indian decision-makers from exploring shared interests with Pakistan that could become the basis for initiating Confidence Building Measures. (Latham 1999: 150)

It is evident that on the issue of India's strategic practice, the scholarship can be arranged along a spectrum. One extremity of the continuum is occupied by scholars who argue that internal disunity and cultural attributes prevented Indians from developing a tradition of strategic thinking of any kind. Academics claiming to approach the issue of culture in more dynamic terms, but who still dabble in the exercise of identifying cultural markers, fall somewhere at the centre of the spectrum. Finally, there are scholars who contend that Indian strategists showed a decided preference for the realist approach, a position that takes them to the other end of the continuum. However, if there is one thing that this panoramic view of positions reveals, it is their shared penchant to regard history and culture as a seamless whole from which validations of contemporary positions can be sought. The tendency to collapse the past into the present is, at a fundamental level, a flawed approach to any issue. It is for this reason that IR scholarship on India has progressed little despite the burgeoning literature on culture studies.

CONCLUSION

The Indian discourse on strategic thinking and practice presents us with a classic case of reflexivity, wherein the images that the colonialists drew up about the country were accepted as authentic representations of reality. Far from rectifying the skewed images, contemporary scholarship on India has gone on to further reinforce these in its studies. The spirit of critical enquiry has been altogether absent within IR for two important reasons. Firstly, IR scholarship in India is directed by a definite policy orientation that demands attention be paid to issues of immediate concern. The transient nature of issues, coupled with the changing profile of academics increasingly engaged in policy analysis, have made historical enquiry within IR redundant. Secondly, the near-total lack of dialogue between the fields of IR and history, which assert that they have very little to learn from each other, has further pushed the call for interdisciplinary studies to the margins. So long as IR remains constricted within its isolated field of enquiry, issues of identity and self-perception of post-colonial societies like India shall remain unaddressed. A constructive dialogue with other disciplines alone offers the hope for correcting the Eurocentric bias within IR theory and for expunging long-held orientalist caricatures from popular perception. The advantages of adopting an interdisciplinary approach are

many, and one of the areas where its beneficial effects would be felt the most is that of strategic history, which remains an understudied aspect of international politics. In the next chapter, we will examine the key material and ideational factors that shaped the grand strategy of one of most prosperous and populous empires of world history- the Mughal empire.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MAKING OF MUGHAL GRAND STRATEGY: MATERIAL AND IDEATIONAL INFLUENCES

Extending the argument made in the previous chapter for developing a historically 'deep' understanding of India's strategic practice, the attempt here would be to explain its evolution during a particular historical period. The chapter looks at the significant material and ideational influences that went into the making of Akbar's grand strategy, and is divided into three broad segments. In the first section, we will look at the manner in which material influences such as the distance factor and the vast military potential of Indian society shaped the orientation of Mughal grand strategy. Likewise, the subsequent section traces the ideational factors that determined the tenor of Akbar's policies towards the indigenous elite. The combined thrust of these two sections lies in the central argument of the chapter that while Akbar innovated with his policies, to a great extent he drew from existing ancient and medieval traditions of kingship, and learnt to work within the constraints of the time. The final segment outlines the parameters of Akbar's accommodationist grand strategy, particularly the key instruments of socialisation through which it was implemented.

Although Akbar pursued certain policies that were not altogether novel, he had to devise a long-term strategy to effectively meet the challenge of endemic violence. The grand strategy he adopted was one of accommodation, wherein assimilative and manipulative policies were pursued to incorporate and control adversaries. This implied a progressively lesser reliance on coercion in the pursuit of political goals. The use of force increasingly became a political statement of Mughal military might within the system, although it continued to define Mughal relations with the powers at the margins of the empire. The interplay of force and conciliation, and of military superiority and participatory tactics, yielded results which were unprecedented in the entire history of medieval India. A relatively peaceful core was set off from the restive and rebellious periphery, although the basic Mughal approach in both cases was one of accommodation. Seen through the realist interpretative lens, accommodation is a function of power

distribution within the system. However, a materialist approach does not offer help much in explaining the differing degrees of coercion levels that the regions constituting the core and the periphery of the Mughal empire experienced. The key factor that would explain the variation in outcome is socialisation, a key Mughal stratagem that evolved with the development of Akbar's policy of accommodation.

MATERIAL FACTORS

Distance as a Variable in Indian History

In the medieval ages, distance cast a determining influence on the manner in which imperialism developed in different regions within an empire. Recognising the impediments that distance presented to ambitious rulers keen on expanding their territories, Braudel termed distance as 'public enemy number one' in the sixteenth century. (Cited in Parker: 48) Watson also dwells upon the evolving relations between the centre and the periphery in the context of 'marcher states'. The tendency towards tighter imperial control where it had initially slackened came from the marcher communities that lived on the fringes or 'marches' of civilisation. Being on the periphery had toughened them politically and militarily and these communities sought to further centralise power that had 'softened' at the centre. As examples of marcher states, Watson cites the Persians and the Mauryans who

> 'recognized the value of the administrative experience of the centre, and while they established their dominance by force they were quick to adapt to their purposes the previously existing but now weakened patterns of imperial authority which they found to hand.' (Watson 1992: 128)

The dynamics of power that are set in motion by distance are inherent in the very characterisation of imperialism. Sample, for instance, a standard definition of imperialism that factors in the intervention of distance thus,

> 'Imperialism is characterized by the exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination: both involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies. Typically, it is the deliberate product of a political machine that rules from the centre, and extends its control to the furthest reaches of the peripheries...' (Young 2001: 27)

In ancient Indian thought, distance as a factor separating distinct political realms did not exist as there were no distinct dominions between which space could be definitively measured. Kautilya, for example did not make a stark demarcation between the internal and external realms of a state. This is not to say that ancient India lacked a sense of physical space and geographical consciousness. Ancient texts like the *Vishnudharmottara Purana* refer to a particular group of kings called the *samanta* that constituted the outer reaches of the kingdom. By their peripheral location and the lower numerical strength attached to it by the kingdom, the *samantas* were always at a position of relative disadvantage in comparison to the seat of power at the centre. (Inden 2006: 143-144) Notions such as 'the conqueror of the earth' or 'the universal emperor' also embodied the awareness of geographical scale. The conquest of the entire earth was theoretically possible since the circle of kings extended the network of power relations far beyond the immediacies of a king's boundaries. As far as Kautilya's schema is concerned, the proximity of the enemy was central to his calculations, evident from his assertion that 'the *janapada* is shared with the enemy.' Kautilya further expanded on the constituents of a king's domain, namely 'those who are likely to be won over (by the enemy)' and 'those who are not likely to be won over (by the enemy).' (Wink 1986: 14)

Given that the domain of the king is not clearly demarcated, the strategies Kautilya suggested were the same for dealing with both internal sedition and external invasion. Since the enemy existed both outside and within a king's domain, the use of force as the primary state instrument was not advised by strategists like Kautilya and Manu. Indeed, coercion was less favoured than sedition in terms of potency and effectiveness in countering enemies. The reason for force being attributed less significance lay in the nature of sovereignty the state aspired to achieve. As Andre Wink notes,

> 'The conquest which is desired by the conqueror-to-be is not primarily a matter of military action, but of expansion of his sovereignty or *svavisaya* by effecting alliances with 'those who are likely to be won over' under the enemy's sovereignty or *paravisaya*.' (Wink 1986: 15)

The variable of distance impacted upon the nature of relations that the Mughals forged with local elites and determined the degree of accommodation and expansion

under Mughal grand strategy. The areas, which were situated around the imperial capital constituted the core of the empire. Northern and north-western territories were strategically important to Akbar who made concerted efforts to draw them into his imperial system through the process of socialisation. According to Joseph Schwartzberg, the Mughals attained

> '...a greater degree of territorial control within the Indian subcontinent than had any previous power. Moreover, they maintained their status as a pan-Indian power for nearly one and a half centuries, slightly longer than either the Mauryas or the Guptas.' (Schwartzberg 1992: 260)

However, in the Deccan region which formed the periphery of the Mughal empire, contact with local rulers was sporadic. Schwartzberg notes that

> '...many small and medium-sized states have survived over much of Indian history merely by virtue of their remoteness from the contemporary principal centres of political and military power. This is, of course, what accounts for the continuation of Bijapur and Golconda as independent entities well beyond the time when the Mughals attained pan-Indian status.' (Schwartzberg 1992: 259)

Marginalised from the process of socialisation, these regional powers did not identify with the Mughal state and viewed its advance with hostility. The grand strategy pursued was more coercive in these cases and less successful as well.

Schwartzberg's analysis of the major powers of the Indian subcontinent panning the ancient, medieval and modern periods, allows us to place the political environment of the Mughal era in a broader context. His study of pan-Indian powers (those that controlled four out of the five analytic regions he divides the country into) and supra-regional powers bring out some interesting patterns in the geopolitical power configurations in the subcontinent from the ancient period onwards. Across historical periods, the North Indian Plain has remained the predominant seat of political power both in terms of frequency and longevity, and from where empires have fanned out in all directions. (Kulke and Rothermund 1998: 9) The modern period saw a geopolitical shift in the subcontinent, wherein instead of fanning outwards from a particular locus of power, power began to gradually move further inland. Prior to the British, no coastal state had risen to become a pan-Indian power. Certain regional patterns of power distributions begin to emerge that testify the centrality of location and distance in India's strategic practice. This is amply

demonstrated by the fact that the north-western and southern regions not only failed to produce a power of pan-Indian status, but also threw up few supra-regional powers. Their geographical location on the peripheries of the Indian landmass accounts for their strategic disadvantage in terms of power distribution.[107] (Schwartzberg 1992: 260)

For a millennium from 560 BC to 647 AD that characterises the ancient period, the time-span for pan-Indian powers was the longest.[108] For instance, Magadha was the power centre for almost 500 years from mid-sixth century BC as there was no other power centre rivalling its growth. However, with the spread of military technology and growth of populations in other regions, the number of competing supra-regional powers increased. As a result, the early medieval and Sultanate periods saw the simultaneous rise of up to five supra-regional states and the relative decline of pan-Indian powers. Increased competition meant greater frequency of wars among powers in the struggle to gain control. However, the last four centuries have seen the consolidation of power under pan-Indian states, beginning with the Mughals. Increased agricultural productivity coupled with better communication systems and enhanced military capabilities made it possible to establish a pan-Indian state under the Mughals and the British, without necessarily spelling the end for smaller regional entities. Thus, we see the coexistence of the pan-Indian state with lesser powers that did not pose a serious threat to the stability of the system, a situation that was difficult to envisage a few centuries earlier when supremacy meant the extermination of all other power centres. (Schwartzberg 1992: 259)

The strategic implication of ruling over such a political environment was that the centralised system of administration prevalent in the ancient period, gave way to a more decentralised mode of governance among pan-Indian medieval rulers such as the Mughals. The existence of competing power centres significantly reduced the power potential of the

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[107] Schwartzberg's data tabulation on the duration of pan-Indian and supra-regional powers in the major regions reveals the dominance of the North-Centre region as the seat of power across historical periods (from 560 BC to 1976 AD), accounting for over 48% of all the periods put together. The southern region saw a proliferation of supra-regional states at its peak during the Mughal period, at 58%. The upshot of this detailed analysis is that geographical location has played an important role in determining the probability of political dominance. (Schwartzberg 1992: 259)

[108] Schwartzberg defines pan-Indian states as those which stretch over at least four out of the five analytic regions he divides the subcontinent into (north-west, north-centre, north-east, west and south). Supra-regional powers are those that extend over at least two analytic regions. (Schwartzberg 1992: 254)

pan-Indian state and thus, necessitated a mediated approach to administration. (Schwartzberg 1992: 258) Akbar's accommodation can be seen as the search for a favourable compromise with the rival supra-regional powers he could not afford to ignore.

Distance emerges as a key variable in Stewart Gordon's analysis of Mughal relations with other regional powers. He discerns three zones of distinct military cultures which were set apart by their respective weaponry and codes of conduct. The first zone he terms as the Rajput zone, which girdles Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, UP and the Himalayan foothills. The Rajput clans were militarily armed with cavalry equipment suitable for warfare in the open battlefield. Interestingly, Gordon opens his brief note on the Rajput zone by clubbing the Mughals and the Rajputs together. He writes,

> 'Over the course of more than 150 years - from the early sixteenth century to the mid seventeenth century - the Mughals and certain armed indigenous cavalry groups figured out how to integrate....Both the Mughals and the indigenous participants were changed by the process. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this Rajput ethos had taken on a life of its own and was a widely-used blueprint for military entrepreneurship.' (Gordon 1994: 182)

Given the fit in the war-making techniques of the Mughals and the Rajputs, this conjunction is not entirely inappropriate. The Mughals also relied on heavily armed mounted archers equipped with the sword, and for which the open field presented the ideal theatre of war. The Mughal mode of warfare signalled a break from the traditional method of war-making which relied on the elephant charge. However, the edge in the battlefield did not necessarily translate into superiority in all departments of warfare. For instance, compared to field manoeuvres, wresting control of fortresses proved to be an arduous exercise. Since the military demands of the Delhi Sultanate were not very different from those of the succeeding Mughals, the modalities of service with the Rajputs had been evolving much before Akbar came to power. As Gordon asserts, 'We, thus, must see the Rajput policy of the Mughals as in a very long tradition, rather than arising from the genius of Akbar.' (Gordon 1994: 189) Elaborating further on the military compatibility of the two groups, Gordon writes,

> 'Mughals and Rajputs shared the centrality of the horse, the sword, and the bow and arrow. They had both opted for heavy cavalry... and preferred plains battles. Neither put much emphasis on artillery...or infantry.' (Gordon 1994: 189-190)

Map 1: Political map of the Mughal Empire, 1601



Source: Irfan Habib (1982), *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire: Political and Economic Maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, reprinted 1986.

The second zone evolved in the Deccan around Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, which he refers to by the generic term Maratha. The Marathas who served the Deccan rulers populated the ranks of their army with lightly armed infantry, and cavalry which was also armed with light equipment. Despite the prolonged Maratha association with the Deccan sultanates, the Marathas did not perceive their Deccan rulers in the manner the Rajputs regarded their Mughal masters, and certainly did not believe in establishing personal ties through marital alliances. The Marathas remained more closely associated with their land

than the Rajputs, their service following the agricultural cycle that meant a seasonal cessation of military activity. (Gordon 1994: 204) The third zone comprised of the region surrounding the Vijayanagara empire south of the Tungabhadra River. The military strength of the Nayakas was traditionally derived from its swelling ranks of infantrymen, light cavalry and a sizeable section of elephants.

Yet, however dynamic a hegemonic discourse may be, it tends to be set in a pattern that had proven to be successful in winning over secondary powers. Hegemons display reluctance in tampering with the winning strategy, which results in its inability to reinvent its discourse to co-opt the new powers that lie on the fringes of an expanding empire. As Gordon observed of the successful Mughal strategy of assimilation,

> 'The Mughals had only one model for the integration of indigenous military talent. That was the Rajput. It had been mutually developed in the North over several generations before the Mughals crossed the Tapti. By and large, it was a successful amalgamation of prior Rajput ideas and Mughal core values.' (Gordon 1994: 204)

This propensity is further compounded by the fact that the strategic discourse tends to be dominated by certain actors within the system who seek to preserve the order in which their interests are best secured. The inclusion and participation of a group may be at the exclusion and marginalisation of another. Change in the status-quo which often follows the expansion of the empire may be seen by dominant participants as a threat to their stakes within the system. At the level of discourse, the participant 'in-group' would press for greater cohesion within the hegemonic system at the cost of the alienation of the 'out-group'. The Mughal case presents a classic example of a state that was hesitant to reformulate an equation that had worked successfully with 'the geographically, ethnically and linguistically adjacent Rajputs.' (Rudolph and Rudolph 1985: 52) The costs of this inflexibility are summed up by Gordon,

> 'Clinging to this single [Rajput] ethos of what constituted a correct cavalryman, horse, battle, method of entre', pay and reward, the Mughals failed completely to manipulate or even see the symbols, actions, and attitudes which might have generated loyalty and made the whole Deccan operation far less costly.' (Gordon 1994: 204-205)

An instance of internal resistance in this context would be the Rajput opposition to the inclusion of the Marathas within the imperial service. The Rajputs fought the assimilation

of outside powers like the Marathas over material benefits. Although the Mughals did gradually employ numerous Marathas, they failed to realise that 'there is a huge difference between hiring Marathas and somehow converting them into loyal soldiers, willing to take high risks and die for the Empire.' That the Maratha troops were enlisted as 'Deccani Rajputs' by the Mughals is indicative of the extent to which the Mughal association with the Rajputs had come to influence their perception of the Deccan powers. (Gordon 1994: 205)

The cause behind this inability to sustain diverse imperial relationships lay in the lines of influence that radiated outwards and weakened with distance. Rather than operate within neat boundaries that cut off systemic influences, socialisation worked within loosely defined realms. (Gommans 2002: 89) Burton Stein drew attention to the discrepancy in political and ritual power between the centre and the periphery. Although the ruler controlled both ritual and political power at the centre, the latter tended to diminish with distance. Consequently, actual political control was exercised by the subject elite in the peripheries. As Stein points out,

> 'Overarching political control may not be very important at all....In a segmentary state, while political control is appropriately distributed among many throughout the system, ritual supremacy is legitimately conceded to a single centre.' (Stein 1975: 269)

The sense of otheration was not restricted to peripheral powers alone but was experienced by social groups which found themselves outside the Mughal hegemonic discourse. For instance, the Mughal discourse resorted to a variety of tactics of otheration through which the Meos of Mewat were portrayed as a threat and a disturbance. The Mewatis were among the local ruling groups that had been ousted from the networks of power when the Rajputs organised their territories into regional states. The hostile posturing of the Mewatis and the imperial state has a long history that dates back to the thirteenth century and has its roots in the latter's centralising and extractive tendencies. Shail Mayaram looks into the different strategies of representation that the Mughal chroniclers employed to construe the Mewati resistance as a rebellion to be quelled for the benefit of peace and order. The resistance of Mewatis to such subversive tactics were projected as attempts by rebels (*mufsid*) at fomenting disorder (*fasad*). The Meos were

also referred to as dissenters (*zortalabi*) to state authority. (Mayaram 1997: 178-179) Local narratives emphasise the attempts by the state to monopolise visible symbols of power. For instance, the Mughal administration forbade the Meos from retaining their horses which could be deployed to challenge the state apparatus. Similarly, the state appropriated the right to play the drum (*dhol*) which was a veritable sign of power for much of western India. By doing so, the Mughal state sought to deny the Meos, in both practical and symbolic terms, the ability to wield power as understood in local discourses. (Mayaram 1997: 189-190) As Mayaram asserts,

> '...the otherness of these groups was seen as constituting a spatial boundary, that Heesterman calls the 'inner frontier'. They are part of the interiority of the imperial and regional states as well as on the margins and beyond their control. This perception orients state policy towards the '*fasad mewan*', who must be 'crushed' and killed.' (Mayaram 1997: 179)

Mancur Olson's work on group behaviour over collective goods is relevant and enlightening in this regard. He argues that a group would seek to restrict its size if the collective benefit is limited and fixed in supply. He refers to such a benefit as an 'exclusive collective good'. According to him, 'whether a group behaves exclusively or inclusively...depends upon the nature of the objective the group seeks, not on any characteristic of the membership.' (Olson 1971: 38-39) The perceived threat to the Rajput vested interests provides the explanation for hostile perceptions towards the Marathas, outside which the dynamics of their interrelationship may be dictated by other set of factors. As Johnston notes, 'In-group solidarity requires the dehumanisation of the out-group.' (Johnston 1995: 160) This may not be as purposive as stated, but the participants of the system or the 'in-group' are aware of their privileged status and the shared identity accruing from it. Sterling-Folker similarly refers to 'in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination' in explaining how social practices enhance internal cohesion and stability within a system. (Sterling-Folker 2002: 76-77)

Both these factors were present in the case of Mughal-Rajput relations. Just as distance as a barrier cannot explain differing coercion levels, likewise socialisation alone cannot explain why some actors are excluded while others are not. As Gary Goertz puts it, proximity to the centre certainly does increase the likelihood of a particular outcome, here, lowered coercion levels in the concerned relationships. (Goertz 1994: 17) However,

it does not in itself ensure their internalisation by the concerned agents. The correlation between socialisation and proximity to the centre of its dissemination is not self-explanatory.

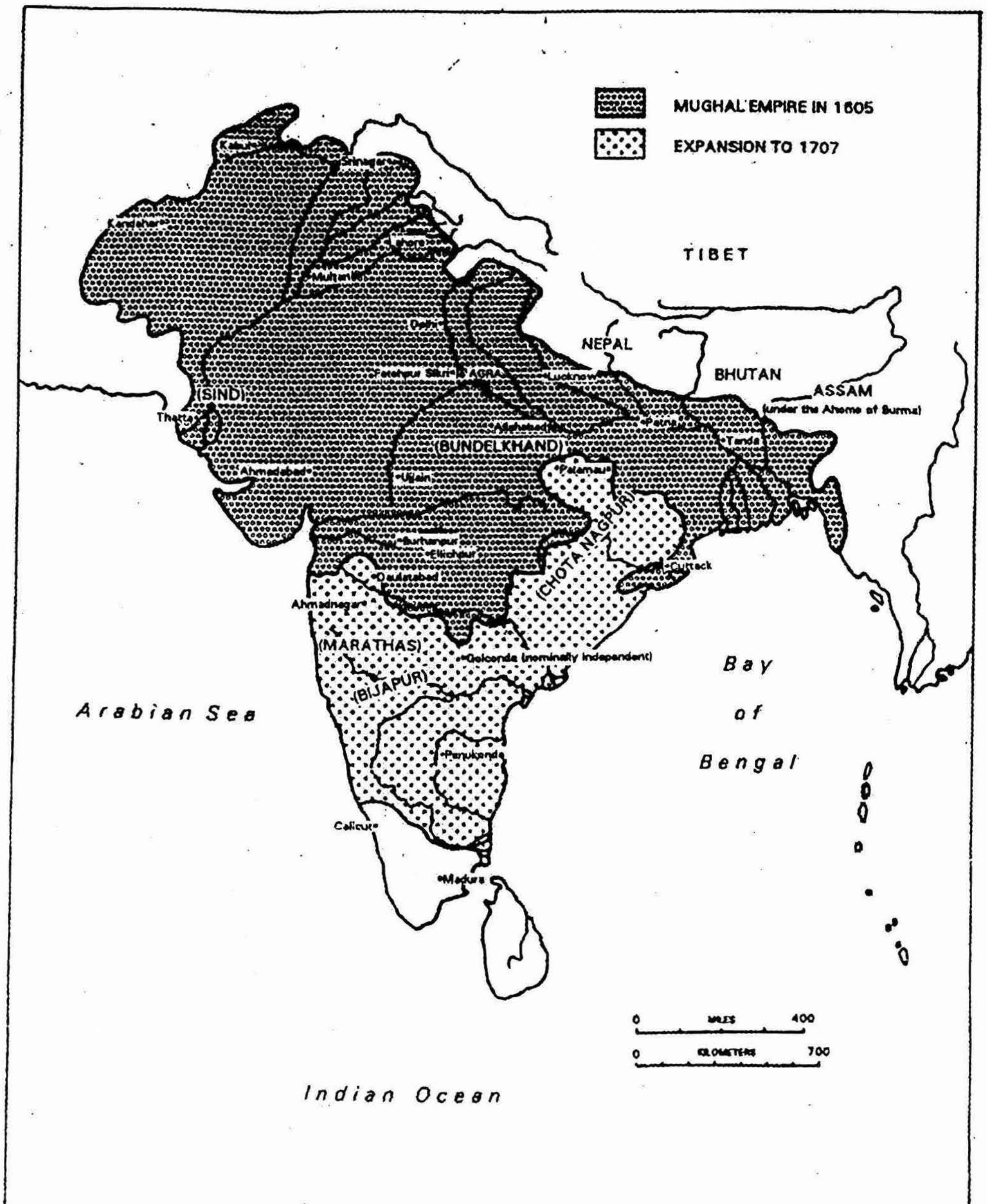
To sum up, the degree of proximity to the imperial capital, which shifted from Delhi to Agra and then to Fatehpur Sikri under Akbar, influenced the level of socialisation the regional powers experienced. The more peripheral the powers were, the lower was the level of socialisation and, consequently, the higher the probability of the use of coercion in the subsequent imperial dealings with it. Conversely, a 'core' area had higher chances of being inducted into the political system and was subject to co-optive, rather than coercive imperial policies. The advantage that proximity to the imperial centre gave to regional powers like the Rajputs was further enhanced by the fact that the Mughals and the Rajputs shared complimentary belief systems which facilitated the strategic discourse between the two actors. The affinity of belief systems certainly reduces the 'conceptual distance' the targeted elite may have to cover to bring their interests and policies in line with the hegemon's. Both Mughals and Rajputs found that cooperation based on shared values meant higher pay-offs than what competition was likely to promise.

The military ethos of both actors also proved to be complementary. The Mughals saw a useful ally in the warrior Rajput on the horseback who had traditionally served a political superior in return for rewards. The Rajputs met the Mughal need for a loyal cavalry force that could conquer new terrain for them. (Gordon 1994: 189-92) Furthermore, Mughal intervention in Rajput politics shifted power relations between the various Rajput clans and ones such as the Kachhwahas who served the Mughals came to dominate inter-clan power networks.

For its sheer size and scale, the Mughal empire was distinct from its other contemporaries. It was more prosperous and populous than the Safavid and the Ottoman empire. The most powerful empire in Indian history had a population of 100 million in 1700, which was five times that of the Ottomans and 20 times that of the Safavids. (Metcalf and Metcalf 2002: 1) Given its spread, the degree of control that the Mughals wielded over such a vast and populous landmass would assume greater importance, particularly since the society it ruled was heavily militarised. The distribution of power in

the domestic system under Akbar is theoretically the starting point of this study. The lack of monopoly over force and the fact that power distribution was roughly even throughout the system was a critical factor that predisposed the Mughals to a strategy of accommodation.

Map 2 : The Expansion of the Mughal Empire 1605-1707



Source: Karl Schmidt, *Atlas and Survey of South Asian History: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan*, New Delhi: Vision Books, 1999.

The Military Labour Market

The fact that Akbar ruled over a highly militarised society determined to a great extent the nature of his grand strategy. Engagement with socio-religious groups as a means to gaining information is particularly notable during Akbar's reign when his extensive interaction with Hindu pundits yielded detailed and meticulous descriptions of kingship, rituals and cosmology under Hinduism. Christopher Bayly adds,

> 'There was more to this tradition than rational observation. Abul Fazl...was also seeking knowledge of Hindu religion and cosmology because God had given all men some modicum of religious understanding. The Emperor and his Minister believed that a varied and respectful society could be nurtured in India through such mutual knowledge.' (Bayly 1996: 24)

Although militarisation was a usual feature of medieval societies, it was the sheer scale and density of the armed Indian society that made it a phenomenon in itself. Fazl notes that 'the zamindars of the country furnish more than four million, four hundred thousand men'. (*Ain*, II: 241) At more than three per cent of the total population, which stood at roughly 135 million in 1600, the Indian society was a highly militarised one. Given that the *Ain* estimates do not cover the whole of the Indian subcontinent, the share could be close to four per cent.[109] (Rosen 1996: 130) A more accurate estimate would be the share of the armed population drawn from the total active male population, which constituted the main resource base for military personnel. Dirk Kolff estimates the military labour force to be roughly 10 per cent of the active male population. (Kolff 1990: 3) No contemporary European society presented such high levels of militarisation. In 1600, military force was 0.4 per cent of the total population in France, 2.5 per cent in Spain and 0.7 per cent in England and Wales. (Kolff 1990: 135) This vast reservoir of military manpower constituted the military labour market chiefly because the participants competed with one another to be employed by the highest bidder. On the supply side, the military labour market comprised two categories of potential recruits—immigrants and highly mobile tribal groups; and the relatively sedentary landed zamindars heading large

[109] Moreland estimates India's population in 1600 to be 100 million, and that of Akbar's empire at 60 million. Shirin Moosvi computes the total population at the beginning of the seventeenth century as being in the range of 136-150 million, including the section of urban population that Moreland fails to include. (Moosvi 1987: 402)

groups of armed peasantry and other local elements. (Gommans 2002: 68) Ascriptive identities of race and caste held limited currency in the military labour market and did not significantly define the alliances that were arrived at or the deals that were struck. Instead, notions of honourable service (*naukari*) and loyalty to one's patron (*namak*) came to epitomise the functioning of the labour market. Recruitment into regional armies was indirect and brokered through middlemen such as zamindars. (Kolff 1990: 7; Gommans 2002: 63)

How does the military labour market become a point of reference for Mughal grand strategy? The issue of the labour market is instructive for the strategies that the Mughals adopted in order to cope with its formidable proportions, especially since it influenced the Mughal bid to dominate the existing power networks. It is evident that the large masses of armed peasantry and war bands posed a serious challenge to Mughal power.[110] For example, opposition to Akbar at Chitor in 1567 came not just from the Rajputs who numbered 8000 but also from the 40,000-strong peasant army. (Kolff 1990: 10) With violence being an endemic feature of medieval Indian society, the Mughals clearly lacked monopoly over force. As Kolff notes,

> 'it is clear that Indian agrarian society was to a large extent an armed society, skilled in the use of arms....Moreover, the countryside was studded with little forts....In such a society, no government, however powerful, could even begin to think of achieving a monopoly on the use of arms. In some respects, the millions of armed men, cultivators and otherwise, that government was supposed to rule over, were its rivals rather than its subjects.' (Kolff 1990: 7)

Given that the state exercised limited power over the sources of potential threats, it is not surprising that intelligence gathering was traditionally accorded high priority within Indian political thought. For rulers of large empires, surveillance was a mode of gaining better control over their land and subjects. Information mostly travelled through informal channels facilitated by the movement of soldiers, merchants and pilgrims. Apart from its practical benefits, surveillance also carried symbolic significance since it projected the power of the king. The notion that the 'universal king' was omnipresent

[110] Tod's figures for the state of Bikaner in early nineteenth century place the military population at roughly nine percent of the total population, and for Marwar the ratio was pegged at six percent of the entire populace. The numbers suggest the high levels of militarisation that survived despite the best efforts by the Mughals to assimilate and control the military labour market during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Rosen 1996: 131-132)

noting all major and minor happenings within his realm was cultivated as an ameliorative measure for his lack of information and control on local affairs. (Bayly 1996: 13)

Since retaliatory power was fairly evenly distributed, the Mughals could not resort to coercion against their adversaries. A coercive grand strategy aiming at the extermination of the enemy and the annexation of its territory would have been a costly and a futile venture. Particular regional kingdoms could be vanquished on the sheer weight of military superiority but the source of military power from which these powers drew their might, namely the labour market, continued to thrive. The preponderance of the military labour market made any solution based on coercion unviable. According to Kolff,

> 'Clearly, an important reason for the limited achievement of Mughal state formation in the 'early modern' European sense was that the state was faced not with individual *zamindars* or rebels, but with parties of armed peasants who represented the backbone of society and who could not be destroyed without dire consequences to the agrarian productivity on which the regime depended for its survival.' (Kolff 1990: 15)

For instance, forced migration and deportation of thousands to Central Asia as slave trade failed to make any drastic impact on the military labour market. (Kolff 1990: 15; Gommans 2002: 75) Military density in areas such as Agra and Ajmer continued to remain high in the seventeenth century. Moreover, the bulk of the military labour market was made up of the armed peasantry, which constituted the revenue base of the empire and hence, could not be dispensed with. For these reasons, the policy of accommodation presented itself as the only cost-effective course of action open to Akbar. The Mughal state in employing large numbers from the military labour market was following the precedent set by the Delhi Sultanate under the Lodi Afghans. The Sultanate recruited hordes of immigrants who had travelled to the subcontinent in search of employment from Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The preponderance of the military labour market underlines the imperative to locate the Mughal state and its military power within the social context. Kolff argues that

> '[t]he Mughal army can never be made into a neat category of research outside the context of North Indian society: as such, it defies definition. It can only be described in terms of the dilemma in which the Mughal empire itself seems to have been caught, to wit, the dilemma between, on the one hand, the territorial state where the writ of the emperor was unopposed, and, on the other hand, the

state as the largest and most honourable employer of the country whose huge army was the fundamental expression of its achievement.' (Kolff 1990: 2)

Although the Mughal army directly under the command of the emperor was not constituted of members of the armed peasantry, they tended to populate the provincial armies and local war-bands. *Zamindars* proved to be a vital link in the chain to harness the military potential of the countryside as they were the primary recruiters of the military labour drawn locally. (Kolff 1990: 25)

Enrolment brought about a number of internal changes within peasant populations. Communities which saw large scale recruitment of their men became increasingly conscious of their identity, being more close-knit and clan conscious. Soldiers of peasant origin such as the Barha Sayyids, who enrolled for service under Akbar and were gradually assimilated into the military system, came to guard their lineage more zealously than before. (Kolff 1990: 18-19) The Rajputs began to lay stress on their genealogical background as a means of limiting the scope of royal favours to certain family-groups. Kolff refers to the 'Rajput Great Tradition' that emerged from the sixteenth century onwards, wherein lineage histories of Rajput clans began to crystallise in Rajasthan. Certain clans such as the Ujjainiyas adapted to the contingencies of time (the Mughals laid emphasis on genealogies of their nobles) and succeeded in making the transition from open-status groups to closed kin bodies. (Kolff 1990: 73)

IDEATIONAL INFLUENCES

The Mughal grand strategy presents us with an intriguing paradox: a state committed to accommodation turns unyielding and inflexible when it encounters a certain set of actors who are located at the empire's fringes. The repeated Mughal offer of incentives and its interest in playing up ideational affinities that the Rajputs were familiar with, were conspicuously absent in Mughal dealings with the Deccan kingdoms. Accomodation as a grand strategy did indeed give rise to different strategies, although the basic approach towards the secondary powers remained the same. As we have already seen, a strategy is not predetermined or programmed to proceed along a set trajectory, rather the hegemon may have to reformulate its set of policies if it does not evince a suitable response from the subject elite. The modified strategy arrived at would be a compromise position

between what is appropriate (given the response of the subject elite) and what is feasible (given the logistical constraints on policy application). The limitations on policy application, in the case of the Mughals, were imposed by the distance that separated the peripheral powers from the centre of power. The material constraints on cooperation were compounded by a basic incompatibility between the two actors in terms of divergent military ethos and belief systems, resulting in an assertion of Mughal hegemony through primarily coercive means of establishing control.

Despite the attacks and military campaigns that came to dominate the Mughal approach to the rulers in the Deccan, the policy did not run counter to the basic tenor of an accomodationist grand strategy. A coercive strategy was consistent with the fundamental assumption of accommodation- the subjugation and not the annihilation of the secondary power was to be the basis of expansion. Thus, accommodation as a grand strategy threw up distinct strategies, yielding results that varied drastically in their coercion content. The aim and approach of Akbar to establish an empire without exterminating the existing ruling elite is reflected in both the strategies of socialisation and coercion.

The Mughal approach to power acquisition as a non-zero sum enterprise was in essence reflected in their dealings with the Deccani powers just as it was in its relations with the Rajputs. To begin with, Akbar did not view the Deccani powers with hostility, and the measures initially employed to secure their cooperation were similar to the ones adopted with the Rajputs- a combined strategy of incentives and sanctions. Although the strategy involved an impressive display of material preponderance, it was not aimed at the total annihilation of the subject power. The explanation lies in the proximity of the secondary power to the political centre of the empire. In the Rajput case, coercive subjugation was followed by a combined strategy of material incentives and assimilative practices. Rajput princes were not only offered high offices, but were made participants in governance. They were required to be present at the Mughal court, which took keen interest in Rajput politics of succession. Moreover, the mobile capital's perambulations touched many of the power centres around the capital and resumed contact with local rulers. Gommans calculated that the imperial camp travelled and camped within an annual radius of action of roughly 1200 km from Delhi. (Gommans 2002: 108) It is

evident that the radius covered the core areas which experienced other tactics of socialisation as well, whereas the swathes of territories that fell outside the radius were marginalised from the co-optive measures of the Mughals.

These practices, over and above material incentives, were singularly absent in the Mughal dealings with the powers at the margins of the empire. Accommodation was restricted to offers of material incentives but was not further consolidated through sustained normative engagement. Securing compliance was a costly affair at the fringes since the relationship was based entirely on the exercise of coercive power such as offers and threats without any transformation of belief systems. That made the margins relatively sensitive to shifts in power balance within the system as the discontented rulers had little incentive in supporting a power that was incapable of offering the same level of material benefits to them as before. In relative terms, the peripheries were less likely to see the value system of a hegemon 'outlast' periods of its decline, than in the core areas. Thus, a nuanced understanding of hegemonic power that differentiates between its material and ideational components is vital in order to explain its varying impact.

The *Akhlaq* Literature: The Ideational Basis for Accommodation

The Mughals under Akbar displayed the distinct characteristics of an accommodationist strategy in their efforts at empire building. That the Mughals did not see themselves as locked in a zero-sum game with their adversaries is evident from the political tradition upon which Mughal rule was based. The Mughal grand strategy drew on the *akhlaq* treatises which fostered a moderate and accommodative intellectual climate in Mughal India, an obvious indicator of what Michael Mann calls 'diffused power'.[111] The *akhlaq* literature are essentially medieval Persian treatises that propounded moral and ethical codes of conduct, and included a number of notions that were non-Islamic in origin and content. Given that the *akhlaq* literature constituted the ideational foundation of Akbar's accommodationist grand strategy, it would be instructive to examine the ethics and norms that informed the philosophy of this particular genre of writing. As Alam observes,

[111] Diffused power 'spreads in a...spontaneous, unconscious, decentered way throughout a population, resulting in similar social practices that embody power relations but are not explicitly commanded.' (Mann 1986: 8)

'The manuals on Nasirean ethics together with the liberal Sufic tradition and Persian poetry contributed significantly to the making of this milieu, and provided guidance to an acceptable pattern of living in a heavily religious but multi-cultural medieval set up. Non-sectarianism and a serious concern for justice and harmony among the elite was desired, especially noticed, and highlighted.' (Alam 2000: 90)

The consciousness that Muslim subjects remained in minority in medieval India and the Muslim political elite ruled over a population predominantly Hindu, spawned two parallel traditions in Indo-Islamic thought. Whereas on the one hand, it led to the growth of the orthodox strain that was acutely conscious of the vulnerable position of the Indian Muslims in the early periods, on the other hand the liberal tradition was committed to devising means of establishing communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.[112] The central issue that occupied the advocates of both dispositions was the extent to which the powers and duties of the ruler were to be circumscribed by the strictures of the *Sharia*. An attendant concern was the status of non-Muslims within an Islamic state in terms of their duties and prerogatives. (Friedmann 2003: 51; Alam 2000: 73) The classical interpretation saw the king as primarily the ruler and representative of Muslim subjects. The reformist tradition accorded a broader and more enabling role to religion in political affairs 'to illustrate, and in support of, the universal human ideals.' Ordinarily, the status of Hindus was that of 'non-Arab idolaters' who were to abide by the strictures enumerated for infidels in the *Sharia*. However, political realities tempered this theoretical position which caused Muslim rulers to variously implement the *Sharia* regulations. As Friedmann notes, 'Among the 'further' Islamic lands, the Indian subcontinent is probably the area in which Islamic civilisation attained its highest achievement.' (Friedmann 2003: 50) In a selection of Muslim positions on Hindus that is fairly representative of the prevailing views in the medieval era, a continuum ranging from staunch orthodoxy to a conciliatory approach is discernible. Al-Biruni (973-1050) offered the initial scholarly perspective on Hinduism and its believers.[113] (Friedmann 2003: 52-53)

[112] The Naqshbandi Sufi Jan-i Janan believed that Hinduism had its own lineage of prophets in Rama and Krishna, whose mission and message to similar to that of Prophet Mohammed. (Friedmann 2003: 58)

[113] According to al-Biruni, the association of Hinduism with idolatry was misplaced, arguing instead that enlightened sections of both communities found religious consciousness without resorting to idol worship.

The early medieval period is also marked by a growing Muslim interest in the indigenous belief systems. For instance, astrological calculations figuring in the Indo-Persian writings of thirteenth century indicate an area of convergence that began to emerge between the Hindu and Islamic traditions. Hasan Nizami's metaphorical use of zodiacal signs and constellations to stress on the uncertain political climate preceding Iltutmish's assumption of power (hailed by some theologians as the 'bright star' of the caliphate) could be seen as contributing to a longer tradition dating back to al-Biruni. Al-Biruni's enumeration of astrological systems prevalent in India and Firdausi's *Shah Nama* which emphasised on the efficacy of astrological predictions constituted an increasing awareness of indigenous astronomical and astrological systems. (Hardy 1998: 229)

As far as *akhlaq* literature is concerned, it relied on religious arguments to gain credibility while attempting at the same time to redefine the norms governing kingship and political norms. Put differently, they presented an essentially non-Islamic political discourse in Islamic terms, drawing on the established and widely recognised grammar of religion (*din*) and the *Sharia*. But the arguments that the religious language was used in support of, and the conclusions that were arrived at, were vastly different from the central tenets of the classical tradition followed in Islamic law books. For instance, the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* despite affirming the importance accorded to religion in the *Sharia*, effectively challenges the narrow role ascribed by it to the king as a Muslim ruler concerned primarily with the interests of the Muslim community. (Alam 2000: 73-78) As Alam notes,

> 'The aim of the authors of the treatises on *akhlaq* was generally to provide cures for 'character defects'...and thus prepare healthy individuals to develop a stable social order....The *akhlaq* literature, thus represents some of the best examples of appropriation in the medieval Muslim intellectual world, of otherwise non-Islamic (and strictly juristically, in some instances, even anti-Islamic) ideas.' (Alam 2000: 67)

In *akhlaq* literature, the check on the monarchy was the not extraneous to the ruler but was inherent in the very nature of his duties. An abiding concern with justice that

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Those who did could belong to any religious faith and came to depend on constructed representations of the divine due to their lack of education. (Friedmann 2003: 54)

informed the position and duties of the king was an effective means of constraining his powers. Thus, the larger principles of peace and justice were invoked to mould kingship into a responsive and unifying institution. The literature propounded a rational view of justice, according to which inherent virtues of ideals like justice were revealed to human understanding through reason. This assertion of *akhlaqi* norms was significant for they no longer drew their relevance and sustenance from any religious interpretation but were upheld for their intrinsic value. Thus, justice in *akhlaq* literature implied achieving a dynamic state of harmonious balance in society among contending groups. The entire apparatus of the state and its resources were to be devoted in the pursuit of this secular conception of justice. Likewise, the early Muslim rulers conformed to the norms of righteous behaviour expected of victors which were enumerated in ancient Sanskrit texts. For instance, the notion of *dharmavijaya* stating that the vanquished ruler should be reinstated in his kingdom upon his defeat was generally observed by victorious Muslim kings. Upon eliciting formal submission and a consent to pay the stipulated tribute, the Muslim rulers left the domain of the defeated king largely undisturbed. (Hardy 1998: 230) It led Stein to characterise the medieval Indian state as 'custodial' because it did not 'arrogate to itself and attempt to monopolize the coercive functions and authority of other, essentially non-political institutions in society.' (Stein 1975: 76)

Deviations from the conventional opinion drew upon the Persian and Greek political discourses, and among the texts that propounded an alternative theory of political norms was Khwaja Nasir ud-Din Tusi's *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* composed in 1235. The influence of Greek thought was evident in Tusi's conceptualisation of the ruler as the philosophical king whose duty was to oversee the development of all individuals, irrespective of their social identity. The *Akhlaq-i Humayuni,* compiled by Ikhtiyar-al-Husaini during Babur's reign, similarly asserts that '[t]he perfection of man... is impossible to achieve without a peaceful social organisation, where everyone could earn his living by cooperation and helping each other.' The text recognises the need to locate individuals within their larger social environment and despite its Quranic citations, does not remain limited within the confines of a narrow religious debate, but makes a determined pitch for universal principles of justice and peace. (Alam 2000: 77) Ikhtiyar further adds,

'The affairs of living thus must be administered through cooperation...which in turn depends on justice.... If [justice] disappears each will then follow his own desire. Therefore there has to be an institute...and a balancing agency...to ensure the cooperation. *Sharia*, the protectors of which have been the prophets...serves this purpose. But *Sharia* cannot work without it being administered by a just king, whose principal duty is to bring the people in control with affection and favours.' (Cited in Alam 2000: 78)

Thus, the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni*, much in the genre of *Akhlaq* literature that it forms a part of, sought to ensure the acceptability of ideas that lay outside the narrow juridical interpretation of the *Sharia* by skilfully cloaking it in religious language. This was much the same manner in which writings seeking to introduce controversial notions into the strategic discourse would seek to do.

Not only did Akbar, heeding to Fazl's advice, listen to the injunctions and theorisations given in Tusi's *Akhlaq*, but he also ordered his officials to read the treatise regularly. The philosophy of *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* was also deeply engrained in the Mughal approach to politics. As Alam notes,

'The influence of Ikhtiyar al-Husaini's *Akhlaq* is unmistakable on their [Mughals'] religious and political views as well as their actual politics. Babur's descendants in India sought stability, as al-Husaini had desired, by harmonizing their political actions with the *akhlaqi* norms of governance...' (Alam 2000: 84)

The affinity between Fazl's opinion and *akhlaqi* ethics on the role of reason and the position of the ruler is therefore not surprising. The Mughals were attentive to the concerns of the diverse social groups that made up their imperial subjects, and one of the initiatives Akbar took in this regard was to patronise the official translation of ancient Indian texts. Fazl notes that Akbar's objective in commissioning translations of Sanskrit works into Persian was to smoothen out differences between the two communities through reasoned argument and debate. Jahangir, in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, notes that Akbar was

'...always associated with the learned of, every creed and religion, especially with Pandits and the learned of India, and although he was illiterate, so much became clear to him through constant intercourse with the learned and wise...that his deficiency was not thought of.'[114] (*TJ*: 33)

[114] For a discussion on Akbar's engagement with Jain religious leaders, see Prasad 1997: 97-107.

The *akhlaqi* emphasis on reason as the path to justice is amply evident in Fazl's argument that the translations offered the way out by encouraging people to 'refrain from hostility...seek truth, find out each other's virtues and vices and endeavour to correct themselves.'[115] (Cited in Alam 2000: 85) By patronising translations of Hindu texts, Akbar and his successors were also according importance and recognition to the pre-Islamic phase of Indian history to which these texts belonged.[116] In a sense, the official project 'secularised' the reading of history by expanding its ambit further back in time than an Islamic reading would render. (Alam 2000: 85) As Friedmann observes,

> '...it is clear that Akbar's policies created an atmosphere in which the belief in the exclusive truth of Islam was substantially undermined. The willingness of Akbar to admit Hindu sages into his presence and to listen to their religious discourses implied that their views were worthy of consideration....The classical conviction that Islam is the only true religion...lost its axiomatic nature, and the way was opened for the development of conciliatory attitudes towards Hinduism.' (Friedmann 2003: 55)

Akbar's keen interest in engaging religious leaders in debates can be read in a different light. Patronising court discussions on diverse issues was one of the many sources of information that Indian kings tapped, grounded as they were in social networks. The official channel was supplemented by what Bayly calls the 'patrimonial knowledge' of specific regions which rulers gained from chiefs. Kings also sought access to 'affective knowledge' through 'participation in communities of belief and marriage, through religious affiliation and association with holy men, seers, astrologers and physicians.' (Bayly 1996: 23-27) The king's personal participation in these exercises was in keeping with his image as the upholder of order in society, although communities were left to arbitrate on moral issues. These self-controlling social mechanisms probably explain why active state intervention in carrying out religious persecutions and controlling heretical practices that occurred in early modern Europe and Shia Iran did not

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[115] Al-Badaoni offers a counter-narrative to Fazl's portrayal of a liberal and tolerant Mughal regime. Badaoni's *Muntakhabu-T-Tawarikh*, compiled before his death in 1615, should be read in the context of his general disapproval of Akbar's eclecticism that amounted to an undermining of Islamic practices in favour of more moderate ones. (*MT* 1898)

[116] However, the early years of Akbar's reign saw a general sense of intolerance towards the Hindus, a position that he rejected in favour of a more liberal approach in the 1570s, given his growing inclination towards *sufi* doctrines. (Khan 1992b: 20)

take place in India. Fazl's writings reflect a sympathetic attitude towards the phenomenon of idolatry in Hinduism, asserting that idols were merely 'aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering'. Significantly, for Fazl the much-glorified Mahmud of Ghazni was misguided by 'fanatical bigots representing India as a country of unbelievers at war with Islam'. (Cited in Friedmann 2003: 56)

One of the key texts within *akhlaq* literature to be commissioned by the Mughals was *Akhlaq-i Jahangiri* by Nur ud-Din Qazi, for whom the principle of justice was the overriding concern in matters of governance. 'A non-Muslim but just ruler, in his view, would serve society better than an unjust Muslim.' (Alam 2000: 88) The liberal tradition's most committed proponent, the Mughal prince, Dara Shukoh (1615-59) considered Hinduism and Islam to be complementary and compatible. Dara argued that the complementarity emerges from the religious principle of monotheism that is upheld in all the holy books, including the Bible, the Quran and the Vedas. Of all the holy books, the religious truth is the most well-enunciated and explicit in the Upanishads and for that very reason should be read in order to better understand the contents of the Quran. (Friedmann 2003: 56)

> Thus, '[t]he concise formulation of one book can therefore be elucidated and understood by the detailed exposition found elsewhere...The idea that one must use the Hindu scripture in order to attain the real meaning of the Quran is hitting at the very core of the conviction that Islam is a self-sufficient system that is in no need of ideas extraneous to it.' (Friedmann 2003: 57-58)

Hardy succinctly captures the tenor of the evolving cultural and political milieu in medieval India,

> 'Perhaps there were certain nuances, certain ambiguities, a certain elbowroom in the traditions of both Muslims and Hindus that eased co-operation once that had been seen as both necessary and desirable...' (Hardy 1998: 237)

It was this potential for complementarities and mutual learning between the two traditions that the *akhlaq* literature sought to explore. What is noteworthy about this genre is that it couched radical notions in politically and religiously acceptable terms that made the pursuit of universal principles like justice and peace a commendable exercise. The Mughals unreservedly drew upon this tradition of liberal writings, which not only offered the king practical injunctions in matters of statecraft, but crucially moulded the Mughal

disposition towards accommodation and conciliation. However, beyond the ideational dimensions of Mughal grand strategy, there were more visible manifestations of Mughal intent, and one of them was its proclivity to wage limited wars.

Power in Restraint: The Mughal Policy of Limited Wars

Mughal military history is marked by a singular absence of major battles. Instead, we see a distinct characteristic of accommodation come to the fore: limited wars. But for the two battles of Panipat in 1526 and 1556, and the battle of Khanwa in 1527, no battle of comparable proportions occurred during the period of Mughal expansion. Historians have attributed this phenomenon to Mughal military superiority as displayed in the few battles in the early period of Mughal history and the subsequent unwillingness of their adversaries to take on the Mughals in open battle. (Streusand 1989: 52, 65) This perception enabled the Mughals to project more power than the actual military capability they deployed. For instance, when Akbar entered Chitor with a small force, the king of Mewar refused to face them and instead retreated to the fortress.

However, Mughal military superiority and the absence of battles accruing thereof should not be taken to be indicative of only accommodation. A coercive grand strategy pursued by a militarily powerful state may effectively deter other states into submission, resulting in conflict avoidance. Thus, a state's aggressive pursuit of power can be characterised by a coercive grand strategy but still be marked by an absence of major battles. However, what is distinctive about accommodation is the calibrated use of violence in conflict situations. Johnston argues that limited wars are characterised by restrictions along spatial and temporal dimensions, and goal orientation. Limited wars operate within a grid of restricted ends and means. They pursue a prioritised set of limited political goals and thus, not all setbacks are seen as carrying equally high stakes. This discriminating potential of limited war acts as a powerful check on the further escalation of conflict. (Johnston 1995: 65-66) Furthermore, a strategy that blends both elements of coercion as well as conciliation serves to further restrict the scale of violence in limited war scenarios.

This raises the issue of the efficacy and legitimacy of the use of force against an adversary under accommodation. Although accommodation does not proscribe the use of

force in forwarding political goals, its use against an adversary is usually cloaked in language that is deemed politically acceptable. Johnston argues that a state facing an adverse situation may justify coercive action as a resort to 'force under unavoidable circumstances'. (Johnston 1995: 68) The adversary's aggressive disposition is portrayed as leaving the state with little option but to employ force. The responsibility of precipitating the conflict and making war unavoidable is attributed to the enemy and hence, any action on the part of the state is seen as legitimate and righteous. Contending that a zero-sum view of the adversary underlies the notion of righteous war, Johnston notes, 'The enemy is irredeemably an enemy who cannot be won over but must be destroyed. The concept of enemy itself connotes unrighteousness'. (Johnston 1995: 72) By inference, this implies that the notion of righteous war with its view of irreconcilable conflict is causally linked to a hard-nosed parabellum paradigm. Righteous action must necessarily aim at annihilating the enemy and hence leaves no scope for accommodation.

Such a conclusion is a problematic one, especially in the Mughal case where an accommodationist strategy invoked the issue of righteousness in certain instances. For instance, the Chitor seige of 1567 is described by Fazl as a campaign against 'the rebellious ones', but not as against the *kuffar* (the unbelievers). (Hardy 1983: 170; *AN*, II: 489) The king was projected as the epitome of righteousness and the adversary, by opposing him, was immoral and unrighteous in his pursuit of power. Fazl notes, 'in conquering countries and cities, his [Akbar's] first thought is to enquire into and sympathise with the condition of the oppressed.' (*AN*, II: 536) This justificatory stance was not confined to Fazl but extended in general to Mughal historiography itself. Rebellion against imperial authority was accounted for within the rhetoric of accommodation. Indeed, challenge to the emperor was not termed a rebellion against his power but was depicted as attempts to claim greater space within the imperial order.[117] Chroniclers such as Fazl, Nizam al-din Ahmad and Badauni interpreted the resort to

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[117] When it comes to explaining acts of violence committed by non-Muslims, Mughal historians make certain differentiations. Hindu rulers challenging the authority of the Mughal emperor risked being branded a rebel, particularly to the Islamic order. On the other hand, the refusal of Hindu *zamindars* to pay tax was simply seen as resistance by disobedient elements, from which larger religious implications were not drawn. (Hardy 1983: 190)

violence against the Mughal state either in terms of moves to gain more power or as a manifestation of human foibles in individuals. As Hardy observes,

> '...such violence... [is] seen as a bid for greater consideration within the Mughal system, or as an attempt to persuade the Mughal ruler to alter course, rather than as an attempt to replace him....Abu'l Fazl is as a writer unlikely to depict men as wishing to leave permanently the 'good home' that the Akbar he portrays provided for his subjects.' (Hardy 1983: 188-189)

If the vocabulary used to describe such challenges is anything to go by, then the description does not suggest sedition or rebellion as historians from the Sultanate period were prone to employ. (Hardy 1983: 170)

However, the corrective mode chosen was not always the violent one. Moreover, where coercion was employed, the aim was not to annihilate the enemy but to intimidate. While the act was a political signal meant to convey the true might of Mughal power, it afforded room for reconciliation, should the adversary chose to submit. All along, the rhetoric of righteousness was neither abandoned nor was it used to cloak a non-zero sum approach to the adversary. In another instance of the Mughal non-zero sum approach, the use of violence by an adversary was seen as stemming not from an intrinsically evil nature, but from its sense of insecurity. Thus, righteous war needs to be disassociated from a zero sum approach and is as much an instrument of an accommodationist state policy as of a coercive one. The next section will examine the key dimensions of Mughal grand strategy that informed imperial relations with other regional powers.

THE PARAMETERS OF MUGHAL GRAND STRATEGY

The Insignia of Power: The Mughal Instruments of Socialisation

It becomes increasingly evident that Mughal power rested firmly on the notion of ritual sovereignty that was high in terms of symbolic content, and stressed on the centrality of the ruler in maintaining order and stability within the imperial system. Susanne Rudolph defines ritual sovereignty as the

> '...cultural activities, symbols, and processes that in the absence of instrumental mechanisms nevertheless create a domain, a realm. Ritual sovereignty has ceremonial, aesthetic, and architectonic aspects as well as historically grounded, genealogically perpetuated elements....These are processes and signs by which a universal monarch is gradually elevated into a species distinct from the more

> accessible chiefs and kings of tribal confederacies and lineage states.' (Rudolph 1987: 740)

Symbolic power, according to Norbert Elias, assumed centrality in court proceedings where 'each act received a prestige-character symbolizing the distribution of power at the time.' The precise observation of elaborate courtly rituals led Elias to observe that 'etiquette had a major symbolic function in the structure of this society and its form of government'. Elias refers to such an act of etiquette with precise value in the distribution of power as a 'prestige-fetish' that 'served as an indicator of the position of an individual within the balance of power between the courtiers, a balance controlled by the king and very precarious.' (Elias 1983: 84-85)

Rudolph makes a case for an alternative framework to study Asian polities, which takes into account the ideational and symbolic processes of state formation. According to her, cultural replication and ritual sovereignty were vital processes of state building in India, which extended beyond the state's formal institutions. Rudolph argues that the western notion of state monopoly of force needs to be problematised since historically, Asian polities were akin to intercontinental empires, unlike Europe's nation-states. The alternative framework Rudolph suggests is of a custodial state ruling over the various mechanisms of a 'self-regulating' society such as castes, regions and religious communities. Rudolph's model is instructive not only for the comparative frames within which she locates Asian polities such as the Mughal empire, but also for drawing attention to the cultural contexts within which Indian empires learnt to operate. Emperors in the medieval period were mindful of existing indigenous notions of kingship, and sought to suitably replicate the image of the king in their own domains. The Hindu doctrine of kingship regarded authority to be an attribute inherent to the king, and yet it existed in a passive state since the king's temporal domain was balanced by the transcendent authority of the *brahmin*. Subordinate kings, recognising the divinity of the superior king were expected to submit to his power. In turn, the superior king would accept their tribute and leave their domains undisturbed. This notion of kingship held significant implications for the structuring of the empire itself which relied less on direct penetrative conquest than on ensuring submission. As Streusand notes, 'Conquest thus meant something different in the subcontinent from elsewhere. Hindu kingdoms, even the

most powerful like the Chola and Rashtrakuta empires, had a less coherent structure than their contemporaries in the Islamic world.' (Streusand 1999: 39)

Indeed, the evolution of conventions and tenets that regulated inter-state relations outside Europe is an area that has remained understudied. For instance, Asian states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries observed and enforced mutually agreed norms and conventions within their respective territories. This rudimentary form of international law, which covered not only natives and subjects but also foreigners and their possessions, could be seen in operation in Mughal India as well.[118] A notable absence in inter-state diplomacy was the notion of 'extra-territoriality', under which claims of sovereignty on foreign soil could be entertained. Despite the prominent presence of Indian trading communities in Persia, there is no evidence suggesting any attempt at carving out autonomous groups that claimed differential treatment. Neither did the Mughal state seek to enforce its domestic laws outside its domain on the basis of extra-territoriality, nor did it entertain similar claims made by foreigners on its own soil. In both cases, the law of the land prevailed. (Ali 2006: 310)

Athar Ali observes two aspects that characterised diplomatic practices among Asian states that distinguished them from their European counterparts. Firstly, embassies with permanent residencies in other sovereign states were never sent. Temporary missions to other courts to meet certain objectives were despatched, and were recalled or dismantled once its function had been served. In such cases, the gifts that the emissary presented carried great importance as their monetary value indicated the significance of the mission itself. Secondly, the practice of signing common agreements and formal treaties did not exist among Islamic states. Mutual agreement on a certain issue took the form of an exchange of letters to that effect. If a particular proposal or offer put forward by a sovereign was accepted in another court, then the agreement was deemed as finalised between the two states. For the agreement to become functional, each side was expected to observe it by making suitable arrangements. Ali refers to the tepid Mughal response to Thomas Roe's offer of a 'solemn treaty' between Jahangir and James I, to

[118] Significantly, third parties were extended immunity in case a ban affected trade between two states. Thus, we see English trade with Persia that operated from Surat continuing unhindered in the 1640s, despite the fact that a ban prohibiting further trade with Persia was imposed on Indian merchants. (Ali 2006: 309)

demonstrate that the Mughals, like the Safavids and the Uzbeks, did not attach the level of significance to the notion of a treaty that the Europeans did. (Ali 2006: 313)

As far as the enculturation in the Mughal court was concerned, there were a number of means through which power was exercised, ranging from symbolic measures to those that enabled Akbar to extend and exercise control over political matters outside the court.

The Mansabdari System

Akbar sought to counter the challenge of the vast military potential of the military labour market by devising a unique institution—that of the mansabdari system. Introduced in 1573-74, the system constituted the basic administrative structure of the Mughals. The mansab or the rank, which determined the position of the official (mansabdar) in the hierarchy, enjoined upon the mansabdar the responsibility to maintain a required number of mounted retainers for the Mughal army. The system was modified to differentiate between the mansabdar's personal rank (*zat*) and the troopers he was expected to maintain (*sawar*). Since the mansabdar had to maintain troops at his own expense, his income was calculated on the basis of both, his *zat* and *sawar* ranks. Although the mansabdari system was an elaborately structured military-administrative system, there existed no functional chain of command. It entailed that every mansabdar was to report only to the emperor rather than to another official of a higher mansab or rank.

The role of the Mughal emperor was not restricted to merely overseeing administrative matters. The frequent and extended periods of attendance at the court by the nobles enabled the emperor to actively intervene in the personal matters of his officials. Elias notes that personal attendance at the court also served the nobles well as it was a means through which the nobles maintained their elite status. In order to sustain their high status,

> '*they remained dependent on the king because it was only by going to court and living within court society that they could preserve the distance from everything else on which ... their social existence and their personal identity depended.*' (Elias 1983: 99, emphasis original)

The revenue assignment system put in place by the Mughals was by no means novel as it had been implemented by the Delhi Sultanate and other regional kingdoms in the past.

Under the system, individuals as part of the centralised order of revenue collection could not stake a hereditary claim to their position or over the lands under their control. The increasing control that the nobility had begun to assert through hereditary claims under the Tughlaqs and the Lodis was done away with by Akbar, under whom the occupancy of a position ended with the demise of the noble.[119] Nobles were also periodically transferred within the empire to prevent the consolidation of power in any particular place. However, deviations permitting the regionalisation of administration existed in practice, which were indicative of the challenges the Mughal empire faced in bureaucratising its regional diversity. (Khan 1992a: 62-63; Singh 1988: 317) As Wink observes,

> 'The Mughal empire represented a form of sovereignty, a balancing system of continually shifting rivalries and alliance which differed in its dimension but not in its basic constitution from preceding sultanates of Hindu kingdoms in Hindustan or the Deccan.' (Wink 1986: 34)

There were a number of new elements introduced by Akbar that marked off the Mughal period from the Sultanate and Sur periods. The administration was systematised and structured around the mansabdari system. The earlier system of ad hoc appointment and promotions was abandoned in favour of a more structured format. These now implied a change in mansab which came with attendant benefits and conditions.

The Mughals under Akbar emphasised on the absolute sovereignty of the emperor. Extolling the famed ancestry drawn from Timur and Chengiz Khan, Mughals sought to reinforce their distinct status by preventing the marriage of their women to princes outside the royal family. The religious element was also a crucial input in Akbar's theory of sovereignty. In 1579, Akbar sought to assume the role of a religious leader through the *mahzar*. However, in order to be acceptable to all his subjects, it was necessary for Akbar to make the transition from being a religious leader to a spiritual

[119] In the early years of Akbar's rule, the *jagir* or the revenue assignment of a noble often fell within the territories under his military-administrative charge, which was always larger than the area earmarked as his revenue assignment. After 1561, *jagirs* were increasingly fragmented and located in distant locations spread across several *parganas*. This fragmentation was reinforced by a parallel move to delink administrative jurisdiction from *jagirs*. Together, these measures were meant to prevent the rise of potential seats of rebellion to the authority of the emperor.

guide.[120] The inclusive identity was not only secular; it also shifted the focus away from Islam from which Akbar had initially derived his legitimacy, to himself as the source of Divine Light. The royal imperative to make the monarchy appear intrinsically distinct from the rest of the society was articulated by Louis XIV of France,

> As it is important to the public to be governed only by a single one, it also matters to it that the person performing this function should be so elevated above the others, that no-one can be confused or compared with him; and one cannot, without doing harm to the whole body of the state, deprive its head of the least mark of superiority distinguishing it from the limbs.' (Cited in Elias 1983: 117-118)

The hierarchisation of political sovereignty with the emperor at the top was executed and regularised through the *mansabdari* system. Under the revised political order, the Mughal princes were given ranks that placed them in subordination to the emperor, as against the traditional system of collective sovereignty in which they were co-claimants to the throne. (Streusand 1999: 109) As Streusand notes,

> 'In less than three decades, Akbar and his advisers had transformed the political face of Hindustan....The power of the central bureaucracy had increased proportionately. Though composed of men with vastly different backgrounds, the ruling class of the new Mughal polity formed a single hierarchy, its heterogeneity not destroyed but subordinated to allegiance to Akbar.' (Streusand 1999: 153)

Akbar also introduced the convention of *jharoka darshan*, which bore affinity to Hindu practices. He succeeded in reorganising the relations of the royalty with the nobility. The creation of composite nobility was not altogether novel; it had been achieved already by the Khiljis (on the basis of race) and the Tughlaqs (on the basis of religion). Under Akbar, the royalty was also disengaged from the Muslim nobility when it came to crucial matters of survival and succession. The acceptance of the Persian culture among the local ruling elite such as the Rajputs proved to be an enabling factor in forging lasting ties between the royalty and the nobility.

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[120] Akbar envisaged himself as the spiritual guide to a chosen few who were deemed to be his followers. Contrary to popular belief, Akbar did not conceive of Din-i Ilahi as a religion that sought followers among the masses and failed. Far from attempting to popularise the new belief system, acceptance into the select circle of disciples was a matter of privilege. (Alam 1983: 126-127)

The mansabdari system was devised to draw into the fold of the Mughal army, the maximum possible number of military recruits. Technically, it was open to all those who could bring in recruits. Since the Mughal nobility was not sustained primarily on the heredity principle and also allowed for a certain degree of merit, the system ensured optimal absorption of warlords and recruits. Moreover, it allowed Akbar to tap various recruitment networks for which a closed nobility system would have been ill-suited. (Gommans 2002: 70) A system of rewards was put in place and higher maintenance grants were offered as incentives to warlords who enlisted superior horse breeds. (Moosvi 1987: 235-236) Every effort was made by Akbar to draw in warlords to fill the swelling Mughal army. Thus, there is a direct correlation between Akbar's lack of monopoly over force and the strategy he employed to counter this systemic problem. Coercive options would have been viable if the number of potential recruits had not been so large in number and if direct recruitment was possible. Since neither was the case, any effective degree of control of the military labour market would only have been possible through the willing cooperation of the warlords. This entailed a system of rewards and incentives—a typical mode of accommodation. As Nurul Hasan argues,

> 'Akbar was the first emperor who realized the importance of forging powerful links between the empire and the chieftains by absorbing many of them in the imperial hierarchy and the administrative machinery. This policy was continued by his successors...' (Hasan 1998: 286)

However, since recruitment was indirect, channelled as it was through middlemen such as the zamindars and tribal warlords, the Mughal grasp over Indian military power remained tenuous throughout. Had the Mughals gradually monopolised the military labour market, stricter regulations and control could have been possible. Instead, the number of mansabdars and the perks accorded to them increased under Akbar's successors. And with that, the empire expanded to newer frontiers. Gommans rightly refers to the mansabdari system as 'an important instrument in the expansion of the [Mughal] empire'. (Gommans 2002: 89)

To expand and consolidate the empire, Akbar co-opted the middlemen of the military labour market into the ruling class, thereby indirectly recruiting hundreds of their retainers into the Mughal army. Fazl's observation sums up the co-optive strategy that Akbar adopted to deal with the latent power of the militarised society, '...if that which is

numerous be not pervaded by a principle of harmony, the dust of disturbance will not settle down and the troubles of lawlessness will not cease to rise'. (*Ain*, I: 247) The lack of monopoly over force led Akbar to adopt various manipulative strategies including the periodic transfer of the mansabdars and the assignment of distant *jagirs* to prevent them from developing local power bases. Akbar's wariness of the potential challenge from the imperial officials is echoed in Fazl's observation that

> 'Whenever a large body is gathered together of one mind and speech, (and) show(s) much push and energy, it is proper to disperse them....Even if no improper act of aggression be seen or suspected, such dispersion is the material of union'. (*AN*, II: 487)

This cannon, which Fazl considered to be 'constant with the religion of sovereignty', came to inform Akbar's strategy of assimilation and was institutionalised in the mansabdari system.

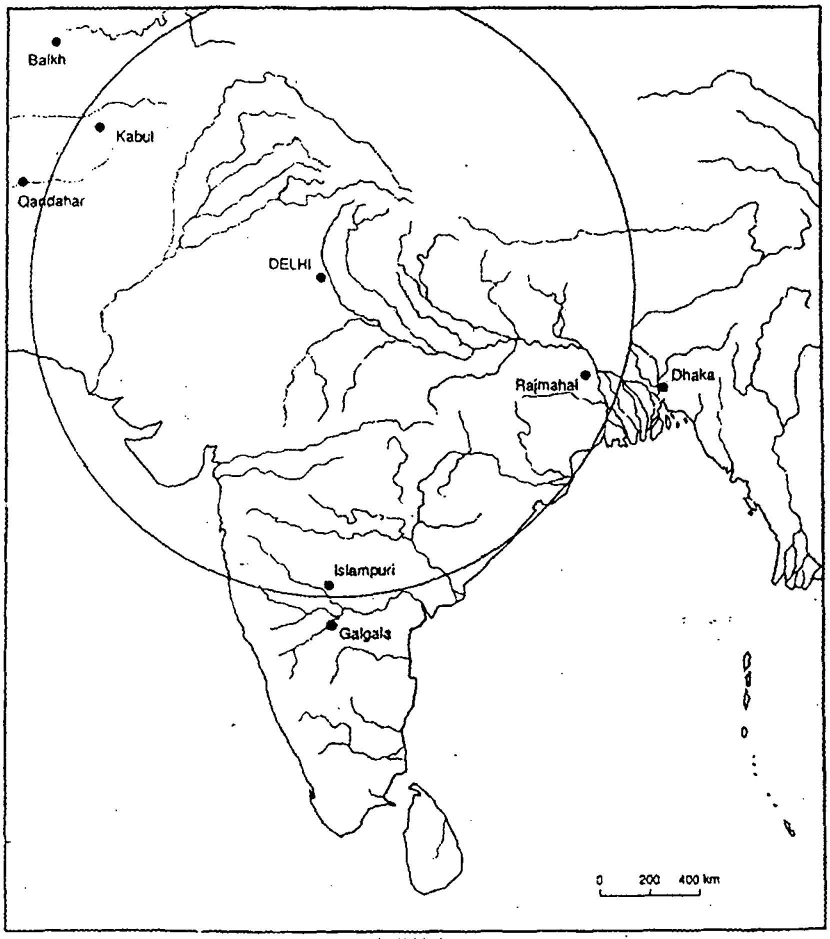
Mobile Imperial Capital

A distinctive feature of Akbar's policy of socialisation was the mobile imperial capital. Mobility was a signal feature of Mughal rule and emperors spent a good part of their reign travelling the length and breadth of their expanding empires. Although Babur used to travel around and lead military campaigns, it was Akbar who made it an imperial policy to stay mobile, and that too in imperial grandeur. Akbar's camp was the veritable capital of the empire where every aspect of the administration- the imperial household, the residence of the nobility, the treasury, stables- was replicated so that the affairs of the empire could be conducted while touring (Richards 1993: 136) Gommans calculated that the four Mughal emperors (Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb) spent 35 per cent of their reign in travel. As Stephen Blake observes,

> 'Of the strategies used by patrimonial-bureaucratic emperors to control their officials, travel was the one most heavily relied upon by Mughal rulers. Moving across the countryside to renew the personal tie between leader and distant subordinate was an important activity in the reigns of most emperors...Even when trips of one year or less are excluded, rulers of the Mughal state spent nearly 40 percent of their time during this approximately two hundred-year period on tour.' (Blake 1979: 92)

The tendency towards mobility is evident from the fact that the Mughals shifted their central capital more times than perhaps any other dynastic ruler in India. Writing on the importance of royal perambulations, Aurangzeb argued that '...the ruler of a kingdom should not spare himself from moving about.' (*AAI* 1963: 14) Given below are figures for the years that the Mughal emperors spent in travel, and when read in terms of percentage share of total number of regnal years, the emphasis they placed on imperial perambulations becomes evident.

Map 3 : The Annual Radius of Action of the Mughal Imperial Camp



Source: Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire, 1500-1700*, London: Routledge.

The radius of action of the Mughal camp, which is calculated on the assumption that it travelled nine months annually with an average speed of about 8 km, is demarcated at around 1200 km from Delhi.

The purposes for staying mobile were many, ranging from pilgrimages to organising and conducting hunts. What did the mobile imperial capital in all its splendour signify for Akbar's grand strategy?

Firstly, it proved to be a strategic break from the earlier political tradition of a permanent capital. Even though Fatehpur Sikri was built to Akbar's specifications, it did not become as effective a seat of political power as the mobile capital. Till the time of Humayun, a city was the seat of sovereign power, which could be effectively undermined if the city fell to invaders. This strategic threat was a real and continuous one, which had spelt the downfall of a number of preceding rulers. By making the mobile capital the seat of political power, Akbar deterritorialised Mughal sovereignty. As Blake observes, 'The organization and activity of the Imperial camp illustrate the exercise of sovereignty on tour'. (Blake 1979: 92) The mobile Mughal imperial camp released sovereignty from its association with a rigid understanding of territory, a dimension that Richards stresses on.

> 'For two and a half centuries, Delhi had been the unassailable redoubt, the refuge for Indian Muslims and the seat of the Sultans of Hindustan. By moving...to Agra, and later to...Fathepur Sikri...Akbar reduced existing associations of legitimate rulership with Delhi. Neither Akbar nor a possible rebel could henceforth claim the imperial throne by virtue of possession of the citadels, the palaces, or the active support of the volatile population of the old imperial city.' (Richards 1978: 93)

Secondly, the mobile capital was the face of the Mughal empire, the visible manifestation of Mughal power and grandeur. By eschewing a narrow territorial definition of sovereign power, Akbar enhanced Mughal ability to effectively project power within a wider radius than what a permanent capital would have enabled. Blake notes that emperors were engaged in travelling extensively across their territory, and

> '...renewing in countless face-to-face meetings the personal bond between master and subject on which the state was founded; they demanded of all soldiers and officials regular attendance at court and, on their departure, often required that a son or relative be left behind as hostage...' (Blake 1979: 80)

The Mughal emphasis on developing a close association with the territory over they ruled bore strong affinity with notions of kingship enumerated in medieval Hindu philosophy. The relationship among the constituents of the political community namely the king, the land and its people is clearly enumerated in medieval Hindu texts. Among

the three, primacy is accorded to the king who is symbolically seen as the husband of the earth and a father figure to his subjects. Whereas the hierarchic relationship between the ruler and the people is so defined in all political communities, the unequivocal subordination of both the land and its people to the supremacy of the king finds its most clear articulation in the Hindu political system. Ritual provided the medium through which the unity of the three elements of the political community were fused and centred in the person of the king. Inden notes that 'Ritual worship was the act by which the transcendent and immanent were repeatedly reunited and the power of the one infused into the other.'[121] (Inden 1998: 45, 52) As the visible manifestation of royal authority, rituals were the means through which the king was seen to partake in the affairs of his domain, namely ensuring order and stability. As Sudipta Sen points out,

> 'In a part of the world still without the blessings of print-capitalism, with sacred and literary manuscripts delegated to the province of the calligrapher, the draftsman, the scribe, and the painter, the image of the empire was perhaps much less reified and more experiential. Thus the very presentation of the Mughal cavalry, the peripatetic royal camp with its huge train, the layout and hierarchy of the imperial *darbar* (court), and entreaty and supplication face-to-face with the emperor (*nazar*) were aspects of relating empirically to the realm...' (Sen 2002: 63)

The initial Mughal refusal to acknowledge the Caliphate in 1526 was later followed by the resurrection of the notion of the Hindu king as the font of divinity by Akbar. The role of the ruler in maintaining order is emphasised by Fazl as well in the *Akbar Nama*. The emperor signifies the wielder of force and in that capacity he was expected to extend protection to the existing notions of justice and harmony. As Andrea Hintze notes,

> 'The historical, rational and religio-spiritual claims to authority invested the [Mughal] emperor with an unprecedented legitimation of rule which corresponded to the Muslim and Hindu ideals of the universal monarch.' (Hintze 1997: 44)

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[121] The symbolic subordination of the land to the king is highlighted in the coronation ceremony in which clays from different parts of the earth are brought to daub corresponding parts of the king's body. For instance, the earth dug up at the mountain top was daubed on the king's head as the symbol of his control over the highest reaches of the earth. The ceremonial bath of clays unified the king to his land and empowered him through the concentration of powers drawn from different sites of the earth. (Inden 1998: 61-62)

The general import of the text is that force is valued as a means to achieve a higher objective rather than as an end in itself. Even Barani who advocated a strong Muslim ruler at the helm of affairs gave primacy to the maintenance of order before establishing an Islamic state. As Peter Hardy puts it, the medieval theologians realised that 'without order there can be no Islamic order.' (Hardy 1983: 169; Wink 1986: 30) The centring of force in the person of the emperor that in a sense personified its rightful possessor is the abiding theme of Fazl's commentary. A visible manifestation of the emperor's coercive powers is the 'large number of troops [that] accompany him [Akbar], in whatever direction an expedition may go'. (*AA*, I: 49) The temporal functions of the emperor are his alone, inalienable and cardinal to the scheme of things. In making a case for his role as the upholder of acceptable ethics, Fazl approximates the position that a number of medieval Hindu theologians took on the vital function of the king in protecting the realm of norms and beliefs.

The Imperial Court Culture

A potent instrument of socialisation was the Mughal court culture. An elaborate set of rituals and court practices went into the creation of a syncretic court culture that socialised and conditioned the beliefs and behaviour of the nobles in the imperial court. The dynastic ideology of Akbar sought to emphasise his exalted status by portraying him as the bearer of Divine Light. Fazl regarded royalty to be 'a light from God....Without a mediator it appears as a holy form to the holders of power and at the sight of it everyone bends the forehead of praise to the ground of submission.' (*AA*, I: 3) Akbar's assertion of paramountcy had dynastic precedents which further strengthened his claim to legitimacy. Babur, for instance had assumed the designation as the *padshah* of Kabul thereby signalling a shift from the Timurid notion of collective sovereignty. By elevating himself to the position of the sole sovereign, the rest of the Timurid princes were reduced to the status of Babur's subordinates from being claimants to a shared understanding of power. (Siddiqui 1983: 32) Akbar's concern with syncretic traditions was reflected in the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri as well. As Streusand notes,

> 'The Akbari synthesis in architectural style stated, and thus adumbrated, the mature Mughal constitution, which combined Muslim and Hindu elements in a new political order which derived its unity and underlying pattern from the sovereign.' (Streusand 1999: 94)

As the descendent of God, Akbar's knowledge and intrinsic worth was portrayed in self-referential rather than relative terms, and was independent of the positions and interpretations put forward by the religious community. Fazl calls it '*Farr-i Izidi*' (the divine light), which is 'communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone'. The emperor so blessed by God becomes the embodiment of perfection and rules with '*paternal love towards the subjects.*' (*AA*, I: 3, emphasis original) Just as obeying the emperor amounted to worshipping the divine for the subjects, administering his people was for the emperor akin to performing the duties of an enlightened patriarch. In keeping with the Divine Light theory, Akbar began to publicly worship the sun. By hailing the emperor as 'the origin of stability', the Divine Light theory privileged Akbar over other claimants to power. (*AA*, I: 2) The position of the emperor at the apex of the socio-political order was central to the balance in society itself, a point that Fazl states in unambiguous terms.

> 'If royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor selfish ambition disappear. Mankind being under the burden of lawlessness and lust would sink into the pit of destruction, the world, this great market place would lose its prosperity and the whole earth become a barren waste' (*AA*, I: 2)

Akbar's dynastic ideology, the cornerstone of his grand strategy, marked a radical shift from the appanage system of governance that had hindered the process of empire building under Babur and Humayun. The Mughal emperor was the sole sanctioning authority of appointments and promotions within the nobility. The nobles were expected to offer their service to the Mughal emperor in any of the three modes- personal attendance at the royal court as an expression of submission, participation in war and military campaigns, and the more formal mode of appointments to administrative and military positions. (Richards 1984: 257; Siddiqui 1983: 210-214) As Streusand observes,

> 'The arrangement of the persons attending the *darbar* represented the society in microcosm, and, through Abu al-Fazl's imagery, the world, just as the Hindu king's audience hall did.....[T]he rituals and underlying assumptions made the Mughals appear more like Hindu kings, or what Hindus expected kings to be like,

> than their Muslim predecessors in the subcontinent had.' (Streusand 1999: 135-136)

Irrespective of the nature of service rendered to the emperor, the trait constantly emphasised and rewarded was of overriding loyalty to the ruler. The constant emphasis on cardinality as a feature of the royal position found reflection even in the location of the king's private chambers. For instance, Louis XIV of France ensured that his sleeping quarters were located at the centre of the first floor of the palace from where he could enjoy a panoramic view of his lands.

> 'The king was, as it were, lord of the house throughout the land, and lord of the land even in his most seemingly private chambers....It [the bedroom] reveals vividly how indissolubly the ruler's character as lord of the house merged with his function as king.' (Elias 1983: 82)

Elias' surmise about the French king was to a great extent true of the Mughal emperor as well. The centrality of his position was reflected in the structure of the court, during travel and otherwise, and in its elaborate rituals of initiation, arbitration and deliberation. His place within the imperial order was indispensable, as every symbolic act he engaged in was vested with enormous significance, one of which was the bestowing of royal robes.

Robes of Honour

The bestowing of a garment by the emperor was a common practice throughout large swathes of Eurasia, although the practice came to acquire special significance within Islamic kingship. The bestowal of an article of clothing by the caliph held special significance as it was believed to be bearing an element of his intrinsic luminosity (*baraka*). The ceremony became popular among kings who wished to confer robes of honour in their own right, recognising the authority of the caliph all the same. The practice, introduced in India by the Ghaznavids and the Ghurids assumed special significance under the Mughals who regarded it as a veritable political tool and vested it with greater nuances in terms of gradations of these robes. (Hambly 2003: 31)

The practice of bestowing robes of honour on nobles by the emperor was part of the elaborate procedures that formed the Mughal court culture.[122] (Gordon 1996: 225) While the article in question acquired value by the very act of bestowal, the significance of the custom lay in the observance of certain highly structured practices of acceptance by the concerned noble in court. The emphasis on the rituals associated with the ceremony ensured that the political elite internalised the court culture of which this rite was an integral part. Robes of honour were veritable symbols of power that were bestowed in appreciation of an accomplishment or as a means of subordination. These robes were a means through which the emperor defined the relationship of the recipient with the court. As Gordon observes,

> 'Acceptance of robes of honour was a precise recognition of the personal authority and largesse of the giver, and, in return, recognition of the honoured position of the receiver, whether that position be of king...ambassador, official, successful general or creative poet.' (Gordon 1996: 228)

The Mughals frequently bestowed their kin and nobles with honours although a shift is discernible in terms of the purpose and frequency of such bestowals. The *Tuzuk-i Baburi* chronicles Babur's fondness for the ceremony through which a wide array of individuals from kinsmen and religious leaders were honoured. (Hambly 2003: 36) From the honouring of princes on special occasions during the time of Babur, the practice of distributing robes of honour encompassed a broader set of meanings under subsequent Mughal emperors. Not only were robes given more frequently and extensively than before, but they were also bequeathed to nobles on occasions other than of special significance, such as on regular events of the year. The robes of honour gradually entered court etiquette from the time of Akbar.[123] Formal induction into imperial service commenced with the acceptance of the written contract detailing terms of service

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[122] The act of bestowal was a common practice in many societies, particularly in Islamic polities that date back to 700 AD. Although the distribution of such royal symbols was not the prerogative of any particular society, the practice tended to be adopted by courts that came into contact with Muslim states. For instance, the Rajputs had adopted the ritual from the Sultanate court with which it had had a long military association. (Gordon 1996: 225, 232)

[123] The emperor also received articles offered to him as a mark of submission or tribute. Under Akbar, the practice of receiving and preserving the presents was further systematised to include their classification according to their monetary value and quality. (Gordon 1996: 234)

(*farman*) by the noble upon donning the robe that he had been bestowed by the emperor. (Gordon 1996: 233-234) According to Gordon,

> 'The ceremony established a direct, personal link between sovereign and recipient. At best, the recipient was reminded of this link every time he wore the outfit, whether at court or on assignment far from the capital. He was also reminded that it was through the largesse of the king that he belonged to the elite world that donned high-value, courtly textiles. Others, seeing the recipient, were also reminded that loyalty to the giver might bring such rewards to them.' (Gordon 1996: 241)

The robe was at once personal and public in its significance to the recipient. Its bestowal in a public ceremony at the court was an initiation into the elite realm of the emperor. It was in recognition of a noble's abilities and demanded total submission to the emperor above all other loyalties. The acceptance of the robe in public gaze signified a pledge by the recipient to abide by the will of the emperor. Apart from the robe being an explicit symbol of recognition and initiation, it also carried a compelling personal meaning for the beneficiary. The robe of honour was seen as an extension of the emperor's person and continued to hold that significance once it was bequethed. A garment bequeathed as such was believed to carry a trace of the emperor's aura. Thus, the act of bestowal allowed the recipient to partake in the personal realm, glory and charisma of the emperor.[124] Thomas Roe who was bestowed a robe of honour by Jahangir gauged the significance attached to the garment when he observed that 'it is here reputed the highest of fauour to giue a garment warne by the Prince, or beeing New, once layd on his shoulder.' (Cited in Hambly 2003: 37)

The significance of the ceremony within the Mughal court culture is evident from the fact that the emperors zealously guarded their symbols of authority so that they were to be identified solely with them. For instance, Jahangir passed a stricture forbidding his regional officers from using certain honours that were to remain his prerogative. They were not supposed to preside over proceedings from a throne that was more than half the

[124] Gordon arranges the varied symbols of honour along a continuum, ranging from the very personal and indispensable objects of royal prerogative to the more common objects that were regularly endowed on nobles. Apart from the minting of coins and reading the *khutbah* (Friday prayers) in the name of the emperor, the *Ain* lists certain symbols of kingship that form an inalienable part of the emperor, such as the throne, the umbrella (*chatr*), the flag (*jhanda*) and the drum (*naqara*), among others. Articles such as jewelled weapons, robes and horses formed the other end of the continuum that were frequently given as gifts to nobles. (Gordon 1996: 240-41)

height of a human being, nor were they to receive the formal bow (*taslim*). (Gordon 1996: 241) The significance of the honour was always grounded in local contexts, and thus was always reflective of and specific to the cultural milieu of the time. It is hence not surprising that courts in different regions in different periods distributed a wide variety of honours (such as horses, weapons and slaves), of which the robes also had great variation in terms of their texture and complexity of design. (Gordon 1996: 228)

Outside the pale of court culture within which the honour bestowed through the robe could be fully grasped, the article and the rite lost their symbolic significance. The worth supposed to be attached to an object so blessed by the emperor was not grasped by members of the political elite who were unfamiliar with the 'grammar' and language of symbols and norms. The limits of such endeavours is articulated by Gordon who notes,

> 'All of the local powers who submitted were required to learn court etiquette and put on robes of honour. When Mirza Nathan [the Mughal commander] got to the outer edges of Assam, the robe of honour had less and less authority. He tried to recruit Gharos into his army, gave them robes of honour; nevertheless, no amount of robes of honour or other Mughal transactional objects could make the hill rajas loyal.' (Gordon 1996: 235)

The British grasped the symbolism attached to the bestowal of robes, and the lower ranking British officials continued to offer *nazr* and accept robes of honour from the emperor well into the nineteenth century, when the practice was discontinued in 1843. In return and as a concession to the emperor's protests, the Governor-General Lord Ellenborough offered to increase his allowance as per the value of the offerings made in the past. With the calculation of the monetary estimate of the *nazr* that the Company was authorised to disburse, the position of the emperor shifted from being a sanctioning authority to that of a sovereign equal, and finally to that of a dependent. Subsequently, the British appropriated the right to proclaim the end of the Mughal dynasty, as was evident from Dalhousie declaration,

> 'It is fitting that we should exert our power and our right to the full... On the death of the King [Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar]... I would propose that the... Dynasty [of the Mughals] should cease.' (Cited in Minault 2003: 136)

Imperial Discipleship

Another pillar of Akbar's socialisation was imperial discipleship wherein commitment to the emperor was deemed to be above all other loyalties. Commitment to the emperor provided the polyglot elite with a 'secular' focal point and enabled the multi-ethnic and multi-religious nobility to reconcile their primordial identities. Elias explains,

> 'The individual's identification with the social stratum or group in the wider dominion from which he comes, whether with village, town or tribe, with professional or estates group, grows weaker or disappears. It is replaced by a new identification with the charismatic central group in the foreground. In the feelings of its members it takes on the function of social homeland.' (Elias 1983: 124)

Once again, Akbar's policy marked a shift from the political ideology that had provided the rationale behind Babur's strategy of elite formation. Under Babur, shared ancestry and ethnic background primarily formed the basis for entry into the nobility, making the political system exclusive in nature. Akbar's policy to introduce indigenous elements into his nobility was, however, not altogether an innovative measure. Babur had admitted a number of Indian nobles who participated in major military expeditions after the battle of Panipat. (Husain 1999: 3) Similarly, Humayun's advice to Akbar that 'this *qaum* (Rajputs) should be reared up because they do not have contumacy and disobedience but only obedience and service' reflects the Mughal proclivity towards accommodation, which Akbar later incorporated into his grand strategy. (Cited in Chandra 2003: 376) Humayun inducted a number of local elements in the nobility and even entered into a marital alliance with a local chief. However, the reign of both Babur and Humayun were plagued by factionalism, and clan politics dominated the Mughal nobility under both the emperors. A large number of nobles were drawn from the Chaghtai clans that viewed political rule as the function of a confederacy rather than the prerogative of a single ruler. (Husain 1993: 7) Moreover, Babur's and Humayun's strategy was limited primarily to balancing the various factions within the nobility. Their reigns were too brief and unstable to ensure the socialisation of the political elite in any significant manner.

A necessary corollary of Akbar's policy of accommodation was an inclusive political system, not a closed and exclusive one. Over several decades, the Mughals developed a code of behaviour that became the basis for a cohesive class of nobles who

came to be known for their personal allegiance and service to the emperor. The code was personified in the *khanazads* who were nobles attached to the Mughal household through familial and hereditary ties. The nobles were to build on an established lineage of loyal service to the ruler through their valour, commitment and ready willingness for sacrifice. Not only did the institution of *khanazadi* entail a constant reiteration and demonstration of these qualities as a sign of personal subordination to the emperor, but it also implied imbibing the etiquettes and behavioural attributes associated with the Mughal court culture. *Khanazadi* represents yet another institution of enculturation through which the Mughals ensured that aristocrats were groomed in the accepted mode of behaviour. Elias explains the process through which social perceptions, which were articulated in elaborate court rituals, reinforced identities of the nobles and the appropriate conduct expected of them.

> 'The practice of etiquette is...an exhibition of court society to itself. Each participant, above all the king, has his prestige and his relative power position confirmed by others. Social opinion, which constitutes the prestige of the individual, is expressed by reciprocal behaviour within a communal action according to certain rules....Without confirmation of one's prestige through behaviour, this prestige is nothing.' (Elias 1983: 101)

The noteworthy aspect of *khanazads* was that personal loyalty and submission was emphasised to such an extent that they came to derive their identity from the Mughal emperor, their master and patron. The *khanazadi* system was an offshoot of Akbar's dynastic ideology that stressed on his divine origins, thereby elevating him to the status of the venerable master worthy of service and respect.

Imperial discipleship was also based on the notion of the Islamic military slave who personally attended to his master. There were other aspects of the *khanazadi* system that bore a strong affinity to military slavery, such as the emperor's prerogative to determine the fate of the disciple's property upon his death. In what was a common practice under the Mughals, the emperor seized the property of deceased nobles of which only a portion was often left to their lawful successors. The projection of the emperor's rightful claim was not limited to the estates of his *khanazads*, but also extended to his heirs. Emperors often complied with requests by *khanazads* to name their sons who

eventually went on to join the royal service. (Richards 1984: 263-265) As Richards points out,

> 'Basic to this system was the reciprocal relationship of master to slave. In return for service and devotion, the *khanazads* expected, and obtained, continuing expressions of the emperor's concern for their welfare (as well as his intense interest in their performance). Increments to... rank, robes of honor, bejewelled swords, all bestowed personally by the emperor in open court, met both needs. (Richards 1984: 265)

With the induction of Deccani nobles into the royal service in late seventeenth century, the composition of the nobility underwent a significant change. The new officers did not belong to the *khanazadi* tradition but had joined the system for tactical benefits. The reallocation of resources led to enduring rivalries between the *khanazads* and the newly recruited Deccani nobles.

Since the *khanazadi* tradition was grounded in notions of imperial service and martial ethos, it is not surprising that the master-servant relationship was one of the most stable institutions of the Mughal era. (Richards 1984: 265) Jahangir noted, 'there was room for the professors of opposite religions' and even the 'sunnis and shias met in one mosque', unlike the practice in Persia and Turkey. (*TJ* I: 37) Moreover, Akbar entered into 'matrimonial alliances with princes of Hindustan, and of other countries, and secured by these ties of harmony the peace of the world.' (*AN* I: 45) Raja Man Singh's participation on a military expedition was interpreted in a similar fashion by Fazl, 'Religion has gained such grandeur through your [Akbar's] that a Hindu wields the sword of Islam.' (Cited in Farooqi: 101)

Emphasis on loyalty to the emperor who was seen as presiding over his realm with paternal care led scholars like Blake to conclude that the Mughal state was a classic example of a patrimonial-bureaucratic empire that added complexity and scale to the much smaller model of the patrimonial state which Weber had propounded. Blake modifies the Weberian model of the patrimonial state to explain the complex network of personal ties that the emperor developed to sustain the Mughal state. The patrimonial states entail

> '[p]atrimonial domination [that] originates in the patriarch's authority over his household; it entails obedience to a person, not an office; it depends on the

> reciprocal loyalty between subject and master; and is limited only by the ruler's discretion.' (Blake 1979: 79)

He further adds that patrimonial states emerge when

> '...lords and princes extend their sway over extrahousehold subjects (patrimonial states themselves) in areas beyond the patriarchal domain. This extension involves a change of authority: from the patrimonial, which is domestic and personal, to the purely political, which is military and judicial.... Within the larger realm, conceived as a huge household, the ruler/master tries to exercise military and judicial power in the same absolute and unrestrained way.' (Blake 1979: 79)

The Mughal state characteristically demanded personal attributes such as loyalty and familial ties from officials, along with the technical qualifications and competence required for their position. It could be argued that Indian empires have historically shown a proclivity towards the patrimonial-bureaucratic form of state organisation. The Mauryan empire and centuries later the Delhi Sultanate followed certain aspects of the model that Akbar further refined in the sixteenth century. (Blake 1979: 82) The line of distinction between the personal and the political was blurred by the overlapping of the domains of the court and the household. The Mughals came to uphold the principle of paramountcy in their dealings with the chieftains, in that they reserved the right to select the successor to the deceased chieftain, thereby intervening in succession disputes. Rightful heirs could no longer claim their hereditary right to succeed unless the emperor so approved. (Hasan 1998: 287) Officials were brought into the royal household which formed the locus and hub of power and activity even within the structure of the mobile capital. The *Ain* enumerates in detail the frequency of postings and visits of officials at the court. Apart from their monthly and annual trips and on the event of a promotion or a transfer, they were also required to attend court proceedings on ceremonies and special occasions. (Blake 1979: 90)

It was expected that the process of political participation would be self-sustaining by increasing the stakes of the participants in the system through continued participation. The rationale of participation was that it evinced the participants to seek the maximisation of interests within the system rather than opt out of the system altogether.

CONCLUSION

The Mughal grand strategy drew upon a rich tradition of liberal secular thought that came to inform the imperial policies of Akbar. Although he initiated a number of modes of power projection using both subtle and ostentatious means of asserting his authority, it is imperative to contextualise Akbar's policies within the social milieu that emphasised on coexistence and social acceptance of difference. The universalist tenor of the liberal tradition provided the appropriate justification for Akbar to move away from particularistic and religious notions of legitimacy, towards a more secular and personalised interpretation of his authority. As we shall see in the next chapter, Akbar succeeded in synthesising the imperial aims with the aspirations of the Rajput elite by appealing to their normative understanding of loyalty and service. The strategy, however, failed to take off in the case of the Deccan powers, impeded as sustained engagement was due to the vast distances that separated the two loci of power.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIES OF CONCILIATION AND COERCION: TWO CASE STUDIES

The Mughal state evolved from an intricate set of relationships established by Akbar, and his strategies of conciliation and coercion contributed in no small measure to the empire's stability. We have already examined the factors, both the material constraints and the normative traditions, which determined his choice of grand strategy and the modes through which it was executed. The chapter traces the evolution of Akbar's twin strategies and is accordingly organised around two chief sections. The first segment unbundles the notion of Mughal hegemony in the context of Akbar's evolving relations with the Rajput ruling elite. It will also explore the persistence of hegemonic ideas through institutions and their subsequent internalisation by the Rajput elite through the process of co-optation. In the second section, we will look at a contrasting case study from the Deccan to demonstrate the coercive strand within accommodation that focussed on eliciting cooperation on the basis of material considerations at the cost of enhancing the normative appeal of the Mughal state.

MUGHAL CONCILIATORY STRATEGY: THE CASE STUDY OF THE RAJPUTS

The Mughal stratagem of accommodation was in keeping with the diffused networks of power that operated outside the realm of state control. Locating the state within the existing social milieu would help explain the compulsions and imperatives behind the adoption of an accommodative approach. A long view of history would reveal that the endemic problem of militarisation and violence had plagued empires in the past as well. Perhaps it explains their reluctance to seek a lasting solution in coercion, and their marked preference to broker arrangements that are accommodative of all the interests involved. Wink regards the forging of such alliances as an operative aspect of sovereignty.

> 'In India, as in all Islamic states, sovereignty was primarily a matter of allegiances; the state organized itself around conflict and remained essentially open-ended instead of becoming territorially circumscribed.' (Wink 1986: 27-28)

Dirk Kolff makes a similar observation on the persistence of alliances in medieval India,

> 'One is struck by the omnipresence of the alliance theme in sixteenth-century India. Politics in this period was largely synonymous with the making and unmaking of alliances. These alliances had little of the nature of sacred treaties and seem to have been regarded very much like service contracts, temporary agreements of an auxiliary character. Negotiation, alliance and- as a corollary-brokerage were the elements that largely made up medieval Indian political-military behaviour.' (Kolff 1990: 91)

The Mughal grand strategy of accommodation was distinct for its coherence and integrated approach towards eliciting the support of diverse social groups. Socialisation was a crucial component of Mughal hegemony, and in the Rajput case, performed the systemic function of order maintenance. To a great extent, the high level of socialisation initiated by the Mughals mitigated their reliance on the use of force Increased participation and identification with the goals of the Mughal empire drew the Rajputs into a complex web of shared values and interests that made Mughal rule over the area effective and efficient. The complimentary belief systems of the Mughals and the Rajputs coupled with the strategic location of the region facilitated the growth of a composite culture that was instrumental in maintaining the stability of the expanding empire. The process of enculturation that it implied ensured the Mughals the lasting loyalty and service of the Rajputs. Given that enculturation followed a decisive phase of conquest and subjugation, the power projection capabilities of the Mughal state assume greater significance.

The Mughal Mode of Power Projection: The Imperial Camp

A striking aspect of the Mughal state was its ability to project power over great distances and towards this end, the emperor devised ingenious means to stay mobile and tour their domain. That mobility was regarded as vital for state survival and a long established canon of Mughal policy is evident from Aurangzeb's stricture,

> '...an emperor should never allow himself to be fond of ease and inclined to retirement because the most fatal cause of the decline of kingdoms and the destruction of royal power is this undesirable habit. Always be moving about, as much as possible: it is bad for both emperors and water to remain at the same place; the water grows putrid and the king's power slips out of his control. In

touring lie the honour, ease and splendour of kings; the desire of comfort and happiness makes them untrustworthy. (Cited in Bahadur 1963: 53)

Akbar came to be seen as an emperor who was able 'to capture the country by means of travelling through it.' (Gommans 2002: 101) The accoutrements of power, which created an aura of authority around the hegemon, called for sustained material inputs on a massive scale. The imperial camp was exhibitionist in nature, showcasing the grandeur of the Mughal court. In Fazl's rhetorical question, 'If the majesty of royalty did not exist, how would various disturbances subside?', the centrality of projecting power over vast distances is evident. (Cited in Mukhia 2005: 59) The data given below in Table 1 is indicative of the emphasis Mughal emperors laid on touring their domain.

Table 1
Ruling in Absentia: Years Spent Away from the Capital (1556-1739)

Emperors	Akbar	Jahangir	Shahjahan	Aurangzeb	Bahadur Shah	Farrukh-siyar	Muhammad Shah
Regnal Years	1556-1605	1605-1627	1627-1658	1658- 1707	1707-1712	1712-1719	1719-1739
Duration	49 years	22 years	31years	49 years	5 years	7 years	20 years
Percentage of Reign Absent	10/49 20%	6/22 27%	14/31 45%	34/49 69%	5/5 100%	0/7 0%	0/20 0%

[*Columns one and two* give details of the rule of individual Mughal emperors both in terms of regnal years and duration.
Column three indicates the number of years spent in travel out of the total number of regnal years of each emperor, and computes the same in terms of percentage.
Total number of years spent by all the Mughal emperors put together- 69/183
Combined percentage of regnal years spent in travelling- 38%] (Blake 1979: 91)

Mobile imperial camps were common both in medieval Asia and Western Europe. However, the wealth and might on display in the Mughal camp was on a much more massive scale than in its European counterpart. The royal entourage maintained the imperial hierarchy with the princes and nobles following the emperor, who was flanked by 8000 horsemen on either side. Spread over one-and-a-half miles in breadth, the camp carried with it all elements of a functional administration, complete with merchants, accountants, soldiers and artisans. The official records and accounts registers alone occupied 80 camels, 30 elephants and 20 carts. The imperial treasury, also part of the

entourage, spurred commercial transactions with local economies and through such economic operations displayed the financial well-being of the empire. The imperial camp also showcased the assimilative ethos of the Mughal court. Mobility and co-habitation ensured that sectarian and ethnic identities remained muted and the thick web of internal interactions amongst the nobles and the retainers fostered a liberal and cosmopolitan ethos. Thus, the mobile camp not only displayed the extensive resources at the command of the Mughal state but was also instrumental in integrating its various regions within the empire. (Gommans 2002: 105-110)

The Mughal emperors, more than their Ottoman counterparts, attached a great deal of strategic significance to travelling across the length and breadth of their imperial domain. The ostensible display was an impressive means of projecting power over great distances and came to be a veritable symbol of the emperor's authority. Such imperial journeys of the empire not only helped renew contact and forge personal ties with local powers, but also served as surveillance missions that gathered vital information of the regions it passed through. However, the perambulations of the camp concentrated more on the safe inner confines of the empire than on its outer limits. The radius of action which was limited to around 1200 kms from Delhi, also marked out the geographical reach of imperial socialisation and enculturation. (Gommans 2002: 108) Roughly the same geographical pattern emerges if one were to examine the settled residences of the Mughal emperors, as given in Table 2.

Table 2
Settled Residences of Mughal Emperors

	In capital	In centre	In north	In south
Akbar	55	35	20	-
Jahangir	75	40	10	25
Shah Jahan	60	45	10	5
Aurangzeb	70	35	5	30
Average	65	40	10	15

Note: Based on periods of > six months of unbroken residence in and around one place (excluding sieges) in the central, northern and southern parts of the empire, in round quinary percentages of the total period of regular government. (Gommans 2002: 102)

Rajasthan, for instance with its proximity to the centre was to see constant assertions and reminders of Akbar's sovereignty, while the Deccani states fell beyond the pale of

Akbar's power projection efforts. Akbar's interest in developing close ties with the Rajputs owed itself in no small measure the strategic location of Rajasthan. Situated close to the ports of Gujarat, Rajasthan was the gateway to the prosperity of Malwa. So critical was its perceived value that any power that controlled the region was strategically secure in north India. Given Rajasthan's strategic location, every ambitious ruler aimed with an expansionist agenda sought to establish long-term relationships with the Rajputs, and thus, to a great extent Akbar's efforts in that direction were natural.

The Elements of Mughal Hegemonic Power

In a hegemonic order, the material and ideational aspects of power intersect at two distinct levels. Elites are driven to submission by the hegemon through a combination of incentives and sanctions. As Ikenberry and Kupchan note, '[m]aterial incentives and opportunities for political advancement...play crucial role in making elites *susceptible* to the socialising efforts of the hegemon.' (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990: 293, emphasis added)

The following causal chain employs a modified version of the one propounded by Ikenberry and Kupchan and seeks to trace the influence of socialisation on the behaviour patterns of the Rajputs. Although the primary catalyst is framed in the form of material incentives and sanctions, the eventual outcome, namely lowered coercion levels, is attained through cooperation based on normative persuasion. Thus, the causal chain that we referred to in the introductory chapter is further extended beyond the stage of norm change to include its manifestation in fewer instances of resort to force.

> External inducement → policy change (cooperation through coercion) → norm change (cooperation through legitimate domination) → lowered coercion levels

Bull similarly stresses on the role of perception and legitimacy in ensuring the effectiveness of a rule. He argues,

> 'Rules are legitimised to the extent that members of the society accept them as valid, or embrace the values implied or presupposed by the rulers. To the extent that the rules are legitimised they do not depend for their effectiveness on sanctions or enforcement.' (Bull 1977: 56-57)

This particular interpretation of how coercion and ideas work in conjunction to generate supportive alliances approximates André Wink's explanation of how the Islamic concept of *fitna* works.

> 'As opposed to a purely military operation *fitna* was at least a mixture of coercion and conciliation and characteristically implied intervention in and making use of existing local conflicts. *Fitna* can be equated with the political expedient of *upajapa* of the Indian *arthasastra*, comprising conciliation, gift-giving, sowing dissension among and 'winning over' of an enemy's local supporters, and involving the use of force only secondarily.'[125] (Wink 1986: 27)

Elias offers a sociological perspective on the process through which variation in symbolic acts become representative of actual change in the relative positions of the nobility. Since every act (such as one aiding the king into his robe) was an expression of privilege and power for both the king and the concerned courtier, any subtle change in the symbolic function was indicative of a corresponding shift in rank at the court society. It is no surprise then that every noble was extremely alert to even slight alterations in acts of etiquette, the preservation of which was in his vested interest. (Elias 1983: 88) Apart from the complex nuances that were attached to the observance of court etiquettes, nomenclature was another indication of the status and power.

Nomenclature was a significant index of sovereignty and power, and gradations in the use of titles were carefully observed and maintained. The world view of the Mughals reveals that they made certain distinctions between what they considered as their internal and external realms. For the Mughals, states located within the Indian subcontinent were vassals and hence subordinate in status to the Mughal state. In keeping with that perception, the Mughals refused to recognise titles claiming sovereign status that kings of smaller kingdoms appended to their name. Although the designation of 'Raja' was permissible as it was an honorary title bestowed on Mughal nobles, the title of 'Shah' was not, and hence we see Adil Shah being referred to as Adil Khan. In sharp contrast, the Mughals regarded contemporary sovereign rulers like the Ottomans and the Safavids as

[125] Wink interprets the Maratha expansion in the eighteenth century as a classic example of *fitna* in practice. However, in the pursuit of sovereignty, the Marathas maintained their rhetorical subordination to the Mughal emperor. (Wink 1986: 40)

their equals and this was evident in the observance of their royal titles proclaiming them as such. (Ali 2006: 311)

Cooperation from subject elites would still be for instrumental purposes: it is in their self-interest to comply with a more powerful entity. Once having secured the cooperation of the subject elite, the hegemon formulates a new order with a new set of norms to which elites are expected to orient themselves. Akbar's conquests were followed not by suppression but accommodation of which marital alliance was a crucial tool. Political relations were cemented through the establishment of marital alliances with the emperor. Establishing personal ties with the Rajputs enabled Akbar to rule with consent without resorting to coercion. Eliciting cooperation from the Rajputs helped Akbar draw upon the military resource base and the territories controlled by the Rajputs. Accommodation eliciting cooperation and participation was the optimal strategy for Akbar as suppression and coercion would have led to costly sieges and campaigns. In the Rajputs, the Mughals found a loyal ally experienced in their mode of warfare and willing to serve. Thus, the long association began with military collaboration before the Rajputs entered administrative service. The following section throws light on the material setting within which the Mughals and the Rajputs found it mutually beneficial to engage each other.

The Material Setting

Hegemony does not operate in a power vacuum and accordingly, its operational aspect of socialisation rests on an elaborate support base. Socialisation, though a latent aspect of authority, is nonetheless an exhibition of power. The Mughal artillery and mounted archers proved decisive in military confrontations. Barring three major battles early in the history of Mughal India, the process of the empire's expansion is marked by a remarkable absence of famous wars. As mentioned earlier, the two battles of Panipat in 1526 and 1556, and the battle of Khanwa in 1527 were the only significant encounters on a massive scale. The other two battles, the battle of Tukaroi in 1575 and the battle of Haldighati in 1576 were provincial level confrontations rather than imperial battles. (Streusand 1989: 52) The early occurrence of battles followed by a prolonged phase of low key military encounters suggests that Akbar succeeded in projecting his military power beyond the

immediacy of particular contexts. (Khan 1997: 12-13) The Mughal military advantage proved to be particularly decisive in the expansion that followed these initial confrontations, as many Rajput principalities submitted to Akbar without a fight. The success of the Chittor siege was to see many Rajput principalities submit to Akbar and accept Mughal superiority. Thus, Ranthambhor surrendered in 1569 followed by Kalinjar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Marwar.

The Mughal inducements of high imperial ranks and lucrative land holdings followed the initial period of conquest and subjugation and was instrumental in making the Rajputs 'susceptible' to Mughal socialisation. Indeed, Akbar's grand strategy entailed a complex blend of interests and values that was intrinsically appealing to the Rajputs. The Mughal offer of induction into the nobility was the prime incentive to the Rajputs. The Mughal nobility constituted the *mansabdari* system, which was essentially a hierarchical organisation, combining military and administrative institutions within its fold. Upon entering Mughal service, a chieftain was assigned a rank or a *mansab*, which determined the size of a military contingent he was to maintain for the imperial army. In return, a *mansabdar* was offered *jagirs* or revenue assignments in lieu of his salary and maintenance costs incurred. Akbar also introduced the notion of *watan jagirs* or the royal confirmation of the hereditary domains of chiefs, which unlike regular *jagirs* were non-transferable.[126] Since the assignment of *watan jagirs* was permanent, Akbar ensured that these did not fall within the traditional patrimonies of the Rajput chiefs since it could strengthen their position. As a result, *watan jagirs* were allocated in areas distant from the local strongholds of chieftains. The *mansabdari* system created stakes for the Rajputs in imperial affairs as their involvement intensified from merely paying tribute to being partners in administration. (Zaidi 1997: 15) With the new assignments giving the Rajput chiefs greater mobility within the empire, they began to establish ties beyond the immediate confines of their traditional territories. Rajput clans with little erstwhile contact came together through matrimonial ties. Moreover, the revenue accruing from the

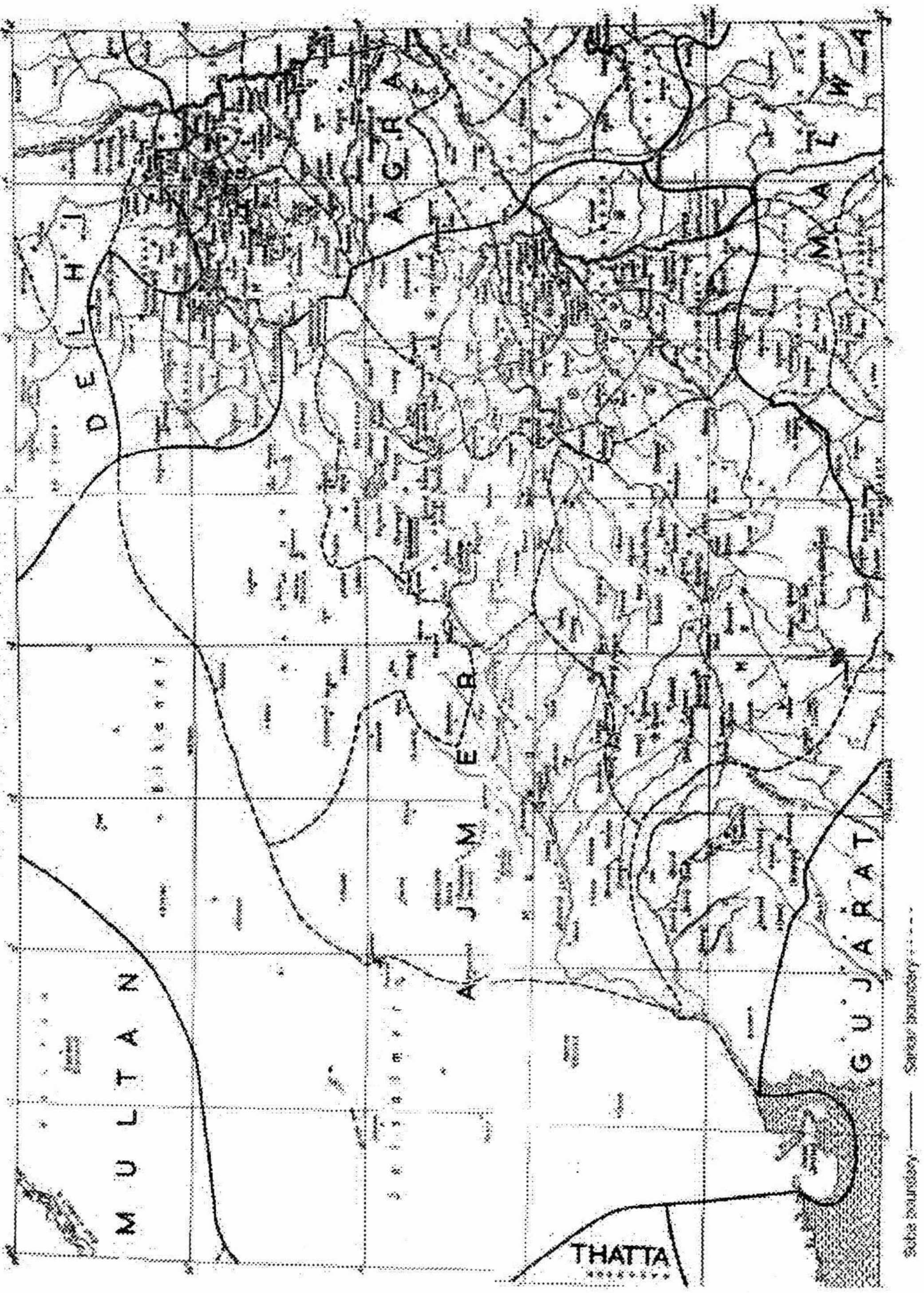
[126] There were certain key characteristics discernible in the assignment of *watan jagirs*, such as,
1. it was a non-transferable permanent assignment
2. the emperor held the discretion to award a *watan jagir* to any noble in any location within the empire
3. the noble was expected to develop a long association with his *watan jagir*. (Zaidi 1997: 21)

watan jagir was calculated as a portion of their salary rather than as an added honour. Thus, as Zaidi notes,

> 'it was held by Akbar that the revenues assigned to chiefs in their *watans* were in lieu of their military service and not simply by virtue of their hereditary right. The nature of this assignment continued to be like that of an ordinary...*jagir* in all other respects, barring one only, that it would remain immune from transfer.' (Zaidi 1997: 21-23)

Nonetheless, their patrimonies were *jagirs*, the revenue from which was part of their salaries. Ancestral land was held not merely by hereditary right but by recognition from the emperor. Akbar gained greater control over land rights as chieftains increasingly turned to him for the confirmation of theirs hereditary domains. His mode of integrating subjugated principalities into the empire marked a significant departure from the erstwhile policy of extracting a tribute from the defeated chief in return for his continued autonomy. Regulation of land rights led to increased Mughal intervention in succession disputes. Asserting the principle of paramountcy, Akbar assumed the right to nominate a suitable successor that entailed overruling law of primogeniture in certain cases. The ensuing contestations served to further weaken clan solidarity while enhancing Akbar's legitimacy in Rajput affairs.

As is with the grand strategy of any ruler, Akbar's seemingly disparate strategies were geared towards his primary goal of expansion and consolidation. The process of consolidation proceeded along three phases, which marked the evolution of Akbar's Rajput policy. (Chandra 1999: 114-116) The first phase from 1556 to 1572 saw Akbar establish his supremacy through conquest and his demand for personal submission of Rajput rulers. The first of the Rajput chiefs to associate himself with the Mughals through military and matrimonial ties was Raja Bharamal of Amber. The submission of the Kachhwaha chief signalled the beginning of a long royal association with the clan. It was during Akbar's first visit to Rajasthan in 1562 that Bharamal proposed a marital alliance with the emperor. The marriage to the chief's daughter paved the way for closer collaboration between the two households. Bharamal's entry into Mughal service was followed by his son Bhagwan Das and later his grandson Man Singh. (Husain 1999: 89)



Map 4 : RAJASTHAN : Political Map

Source: Irfan Habib (1982), *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire: Political and Economic Maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, reprinted 1986.

The Kachhwahas had good reason to vie for royal support since their clout within Rajasthan was not substantial. Beyond a few *parganas*, their native lands were limited and it was only through the high ranks they occupied within the nobility that they managed to amass substantial *jagirs*. (Husain 1999: 95) Within Rajput clan politics, the Kachhwahas were not a very influential group in terms of controlling vast tracts of territory as the Rathors did. That the clan received royal patronage was evident in their increased involvement in the royal military and administrative matters. Following the Gujarat expedition in which many Kachhwahas participated and during which time Akbar entrusted Bharamal with the control of the capital, the induction of clan members into royal service increased both in terms of scale and responsibility, particularly between 1578 and 1587. The positions and privileges enjoyed by the Kachhwahas were unparalleled by any other family-group. Akbar placed them in important positions as co-governors of key *subas* such as Ajmer, Agra and Kabul in 1586. (Husain 1999: 92) To optimise the available military potential of the local elite, Akbar was particular about not restricting recruitment to only the prominent chiefs but expanded it to include the leaders of smaller clans as well. This ensured that the dominance of clan leaders that could potentially enable them to consolidate their power against Akbar was broken, and hence their authority counter- balanced and superseded. (Zaidi 1997: 20)

The Rajputs who submitted emerged as Akbar's political allies, rendering military service in local campaigns against other recalcitrant Rajput principalities. Rajput contingents were part of the imperial forces that vanquished Merta in 1562 and Jodhpur in 1563. The conquests of Chittor and Ranthambor in 1569 went on to further reinforce Akbar's supremacy were established and a number of Rajput kings thought it prudent to strengthen ties with the emperor. Thereafter, marital alliances with the kings of Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Marwar were concluded. Yet, despite their status as allies, the military participation of Rajputs remained limited at this stage. It was the Gujarat campaigns of 1572 that marked a shift in Akbar's policy in that it further deepened and extended the involvement of Rajputs in imperial affairs. Following this, the Rajputs were for this first time entrusted with independent commands outside Rajasthan. Man Singh, for instance led the Mughal forces against Rana Pratap in 1572. Akbar also broadened his support base by involving Rajputs other than the Kachhwahas, such as the rulers of Bikaner and

Jodhpur with important military missions. The third phase saw a further intensification of Mughal-Rajput relations with Rajputs entering into Mughal administrative service. Akbar further consolidated his position by enhancing the role of Rajputs from being military allies to partners in administration and governance of the empire. They were appointed to joint governorship for *subahs* (provinces) with the strategically important Kabul and Lahore being placed under Man Singh and Bhagawant Das.

Since the Rajputs were not a homogenous group, Akbar's Rajput policy had a significant impact on clan politics. The biggest beneficiaries were the Kachhwahas of Amber who were among the first clans to submit to Akbar. The alliance with Akbar accorded the Kachhwahas with high administrative posts and brought the little-known clan into political prominence. Four out of six Rajputs appointed as governors to the 12 provinces were Kachhwahas and they constituted 69 per cent of the Rajput mansabdars. Akbar not only established marital ties with many Kachhwahas but also reposed trust in them on critical occasions. For instance, Bharamal was given the rare honour managing the affairs of the capital in 1572-73 during Akbar's absence. (Refaqat Ali Khan 1976: 193-197)

Although the internal divisions of within the Kachhwaha clan into sub-clans (chiefly the Rajawats, the Shaikhawats and the Udawats) did not significantly affect their service to the Mughal emperor, it arose in the factional politics over Akbar's possible success when the emperor fell seriously ill. (Husain 1999: 89) The unsuccessful bid by the Kachhwahas to place Khusrau on the throne after Akbar's death was one of the reasons why the clan fell out of favour with Jahangir. Apart from the more obvious removal of Man Singh from Bengal as the governor in 1606, there was a discernible decline in Rajput representation within the nobility. Husain observes that 'After Man Singh not a single Rajput noble was appointed governor or given independent command in an important campaign. Most of the Rajput nobles remained posted in the Deccan.' (Husain 1999: 100) From 19 Rajput nobles at the end of the sixth year of Jahangir's reign, their numbers came down to 14 nine years hence. Their *zat* (personal rank) and *sawar* (cavalry rank) positions also came down over the years, a pattern that emerges from Table 3.

Table 3:

Relative Postions of Rajput Nobles under Akbar and Jahangir

Status of Rajput nobles	*Total no.*	*Zat*	*Sawar*
Rajput nobles at the death of Akbar	17	41,000	10,450
Rajput nobles at end of 6th year of Jahangir's reign	19	51,000	21,300
Rajput nobles at the end of 15th year of Jahangir's reign	14	35,500	20,650

(Husain 1999: 99)

It is evident from the above table that the Rajputs represented a sizeable section of the Mughal nobility, although it gradually declined with Akbar's death in 1605. The material benefits in terms of lucrative posts and land rights created stakes for the Rajputs within the system, as their association with the empire increased from being military allies to participants in the governance process. The next segment will examine the cultural and normative appeal that the Mughal state held for its nobility and subjects, and which was instrumental in translating its power into authority.

The Ideational Aspect of Mughal Hegemony

While the support of hegemonic norms may be a political strategy on the part of the Rajput elite, the resulting internalisation was not a deliberate act but a gradual process. The participation in the hegemonic order offered rewards for cooperation and stiff disincentives for defiance, in the process facilitating patterns of habitual compliance. According to Ian Hurd, internalisation occurs

> '...when the actor's sense of its own interests is partly constituted by a force outside itself, that is, by standards, laws, rules and norms present in the community, existing at an intersubjective level. A rule will become legitimate to a specific individual and therefore become behaviourally significant when the individual internalises its content and reconceives his or her interests to the rule. Compliance then becomes habitual, and it is non-compliance that requires of the individual special consideration and psychic costs'. (Hurd 1999: 388)

It is important to note that socialisation is not reducible to the material support base it is erected upon. Weber's observation on the functionality of legitimacy reiterates the significance of norms.

> 'Experience shows that in no instance does domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy.' (Weber 1978: 213)

The nature of domination undergoes a change under hegemony as power transforms into authority. For instance, the period in which Akbar commissioned the translations of ancient Sanskrit texts revered by the Hindus into Persian, coincided with the intensification of Mughal relations with the Rajputs. The imperial support extended to the translation project was integral to Akbar's efforts in making the Mughal state more identifiable with the Rajputs. Several ancient texts such as the *Ramayana* and the *Rajatarangini* were translated under royal patronage. The *Razmnama*, the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata*, was the outcome of one such royal project that Akbar had initiated and completed by 1586. The final translated version was gleaned from several drafts that the royal scribes had penned with the help of learned Hindus chosen for this purpose. Akbar sought to popularise the translated version of the Hindu epic throughout his empire by commanding his nobles to commission copies of the *Razmnama* for their libraries. (Beach 1992: 40) The Persian translation of the *Atharva Veda*, which commenced in 1575-76, was perhaps one of the earliest of its kind.

The extension of royal patronage to translations of revered texts enhanced the acceptability of the Mughals among the Rajputs. The court's keen interest in ancient literary and historical traditions 'indigenised' the Mughal state, and its assertion of power came to be seen as rightful and legitimate. The transformation involved 'normative persuasion', wherein the elites came to accept the new set of norms as credible. Thus, the Mughal state as the socialising agent became the primary actor that set the terms of the hegemonic discourse and suitably modified it for greater legitimacy. Emphasising on the syncretic nature of Akbar's formulation of his authority, Streusand observed, 'Though there had been Muslims in the subcontinent for some eight centuries, there was no synthesis of the Islamic and Indian doctrines of kingship before Akbar's time.' (Streusand 1999: 37) The successful reformulation of hegemonic principles marked the

process of consolidation as rules, norms and procedures began to take root and set patterns emerged gradually.

The inherent nature of hegemonic norms matters at this level of socialisation. The greater the affinity of hegemonic norms to the existing ones, the higher is their acceptability with the elite. Akbar's strategy of socialisation with the Rajputs was to a great extent facilitated by the complimentarity of the Mughal and Rajput belief systems. The affinity of their belief systems made the processes that socialisation entailed mutually recognisable. As Sikkink notes, 'New ideas are more likely to be influential if they 'fit' well with existing ideas and ideologies in a particular historical setting.' (Sikkink 1991: 26) Elites identify with a new value system which does not contradict their established beliefs, but in turn appears to reinforce them. Such complementarity of value systems allows elites to justify to their political community their participation in a hegemonic order, and maintain domestic legitimacy during the period of transformation. According to Ziegler,

> The Rajput 'support and loyalty rested primarily upon a basic 'fit' between Rajput ideals and aspirations, expressed in local myth and symbol, and Mughal actions in this area, which did not challenge fundamental Rajput tenets regarding order and precedence....Only in periods when the Mughals directly contradicted these tenets concerning order and precedence did Rajputs withdraw their support and shift the direction of their loyalties' (Ziegler 1998: 210)

Ideological compatibility between the Mughals and Rajputs was further accentuated by their complementary military cultures. The Rajputs were expected to fight battles as part of their military service, and their military entrepreneurship often took them far from their homelands. The Rajput retainers were adept horsemen trained in archery and man-to-man combat in the open plains. The Mughal military culture too shared these attributes since the Mughal army was predominantly composed of a cavalry force of mounted archers and a developed artillery wing. (Hodgson 1993: 26) Their mode of warfare is brought out in Babur's description of his battleplan at Khanwa in 1527, when that he 'posted matchlock men and cannoneers along the line of carts which were chained to one another in front of us.' (*BN*: 296) This initial affinity in belief systems and military ethos translated into a lasting alliance when it was 'institutionalised'. In the next section, we

will examine how Akbar tapped into the traditional Rajput institutions of marital alliances and honourable service in order to sustain their cooperation.

The Persistence of Hegemonic Ideas: Institutionalising Socialisation

Given that the efficiency benefits of socialisation emerge in the long run, it needs to be institutionalised. Ideas are entrenched in institutions established by the hegemon and such institutionalisation enhances their staying power. Ideas and institutions are integrally linked, as institutions mediate between ideas and policies by delimiting and channelising the flow of ideas into the policy making process. (Yee 1996: 89-93) Institutions not only impart a structure to hegemonic ideas, they also tend to reinforce the organisation of the political system itself. In a hierarchical system where power is concentrated, institutions and the ideas they encase uphold existing power structures by building into the system the costs and constraints of pursuing revisionist tendencies. Particularly in the medieval context, institutions were also an articulation of social opinion that served to reinforce the identity and position of an individual in society. Thus, the institutionalisation of ideas helped codify the intersubjective context within which they were to be interpreted henceforth. As Elias explains,

> 'Social opinion was an inescapable fact of human existence in the court society in which an individual was 'honourable' only if he was socially accepted as such. The centrality of social perception cannot be understated in a milieu in which 'the recognition of membership by others itself constitutes membership'.' (Elias 1983: 96)

The local institutions and belief systems of the Rajputs provide the context within which the lasting relations between the Mughals and the Rajputs can be understood. Akbar sought to capitalise on the prevalent local institutions of the Rajputs in attempting to consolidate his position in the region. Marriage alliances and honourable service, the two institutions through which they consolidated their ties, were not merely tactical moves on the part of the Rajputs, but were practices embedded in their local culture. Thus, both were highly identifiable among the Rajputs and were also culturally loaded notions. The Rajput society was organised around two referents, brotherhood (*bhai bandh*) and marriage alliances (*sága*). The brotherhood had a developed sense of territory, wherein territorial acquisitions by a clan came under collective control.

Although the clan chief selected on the basis of primogeniture stood at the apex of the administrative system, decision-making within the clan was collegial. The ruler, upon parcelling out lands to clan leaders (*sardars*) who were members of his extended family, had little control over the manner in which these were governed. (Sharma 1975: 157) Although part of a clan, each brotherhood perceived of itself as a distinct entity, thereby staking an equal claim over the territory the clan traditionally controlled. Relations by marriage constituted the other referent of the Rajput identity. Hence, in order to analyse the cultural appeal of Mughal hegemony among the Rajputs, it is imperative to gain an understanding of the local Rajput practices and institutions which were instrumental in enhancing cooperation between the two actors.

Marital Alliances

The significance that the Rajputs attached to marriage as a mode of establishing ties is evident from the fact that the term *sagai* stood for both, betrothal as well as for alliance in Marvari. (Ziegler 1998: 183) Marital alliance as a strategic tool was common to both Mughals and Rajputs. Akbar inherited the Timurid tradition of consolidating power by means of marital alliances with other potential power centres. For instance, Babur married the daughter of the Yusufzai chief so that 'the Yusufzai horde will be conciliated'. (*BN*: 375) Although marriage as a political tool was not an innovation introduced by Akbar, what was noteworthy was the scale at which the vast network was established. From 1562 to 1605, Akbar arranged as many as 40 marital alliances for himself, his sons and grandson, of which 17 were Mughal-Rajput marriages. The practice of establishing personal ties with the Rajputs continued after Akbar, although the number of marriages gradually diminished. From 1562 to 1715, 27 Mughal-Rajput marriages were concluded, of which only three took place during Aurangzeb's reign.[127]

That Akbar's political marriages were a means of co-opting the Rajputs into the Mughal system is evident from the fact that the marriages were followed by the concerned rulers joining the Mughal administration. The marriages enabled Akbar to establish direct and personal ties with the ruling families of all Rajput principalities

[127]For details, see Frances Taft, "Honor and Alliance: Reconsidering Mughal-Rajput Marriages", in Karine Schomer *et.al.* (eds.), *The Idea of Rajasthan, Vol. 2, Institutions* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994), p. 217-222.

except Mewar and Bundi. The Kachhwahas of Amber and the Rathores of Jodhpur were the Rajput families from which many Mughal brides were taken. Most of the political marriages with the Rajputs were solemnised at the time when the concerned chief joined Mughal service. Hence, it is not surprising that the maximum marital alliances were struck at the time when Akbar was consolidating his position. However, the two families mentioned above were exceptions to this practice, as their daughters continued to be married to Mughal emperors and princes generations after their chiefs had first submitted to the emperor.

Akbar's unorthodox approach is reflected in the numerous marital alliances he established for himself in violation of the stipulated four-marriage norm laid out by Islamic law. The marriages were not only marked by Hindu and Muslim rituals, but the Rajput wives were also allowed to follow their faith after marrying into the Mughal harem. However, orthodoxy began to creep into the marital alliances after Akbar's reign. Although the Mughal emperors continued to take brides from Rajput families, over time their numbers declined and the religious connotations attached to them also altered. There is a discernible change in the conduct of the marriage during Aurangzeb's reign when the Rajput brides were expected to convert to Islam prior to their marriage into the Mughal household. Table 4 provides details regarding the patterns and profiles of marital alliances entered into by Mughal rulers.

Table 4:

Marriage Patterns of the Mughal Emperors

Total Marriages	*Irani*	*Turani*	*Indian Muslim*	*Rajputs*	*Deccani rulers*	*Not known*
Akbar (31)	4	6	4	10	3	3
Jahangir (11)	6	-	-	3	-	2
Shahjahan (9)	6	-	-	-	-	1
Aurangzeb (22)	2	-	1	2	3	8

(Husain 1972: 305)

However, keen as the Mughals were in establishing matrimonial ties with the Rajputs, they were mindful of clan considerations, refusing to marry daughters outside the ruling Rajput families. Moreover, the marriages always entailed the Mughal emperor or princes marrying Rajput women but never Mughal women marrying the Rajput chiefs. The

Mughals were particular about marrying their women within the royal family. (Husain 1972: 306-307) The table below gives an overview of marriage patterns among the Mughal emperors. The marital alliances established under Akbar were not only distinct in terms of scale, but also in terms of diversity as they drew brides from more groups than any other succeeding emperor. The period of forging personal relations with various ethnic groups coincided with the initial phase of Mughal expansion and consolidation.

The Rajput Notion of Honourable Service

The prevalence of distinct institutions and practices made certain brotherhoods more internally stratified than the rest, which directly influenced their group behaviour. In relatively undifferentiated brotherhoods, kinship was the key determinant of group politics. The lack of stratification meant that members interacted on equal terms and collectively selected a leader who had nominal authority over the brotherhood. There were other brotherhoods that were marked by a high degree of internal stratification, undercut as they were by the institutions of rulership and clientship.

In contrast to kinship, rulership and clientship rendered a hierarchical and stratified structure to certain brotherhoods. The ruler and client were locked in a symbiotic relationship wherein the client pledged to offer his allegiance and military service to his patron, who in turn bestowed upon his retainer his protection and other favours. Clients took an oath of loyalty, pledging to serve their patron to death even if it entailed fighting their own kinsmen. The obligation to serve emerged from having eaten the salt (*lun*) of the patron. The patron-client system of military service permeated the Rajput polity and determined the nature of interpersonal relations among the Rajputs. Explaining the immense significance attached to the notion of 'honour' in court societies, Elias writes,

> 'If such a society refused to recognize a member, if he lost his 'honour', he lost a constitutive element of his personal identity. In reality a noble would often enough risk his life for his 'honour', losing it rather than forfeiting membership of his society, his distinction from the surrounding mass, without which his life, as long as the power of privileged society remained intact, was meaningless.' (Elias 1983: 95)

The Rajput society presents a similar picture of a complex web of interpersonal relations upon which the personal identities of its members was based. The notions of honourable

service and personal allegiance to the ruler were deeply embedded in local Rajput culture. As Zeigler observes,

> 'In understanding medieval Rajput cultural conceptions of rank, power and sovereignty, it is important to note that the Muslim was also included within this hierarchical scheme as a Rajput.... [The] category of 'Muslim' within the Rajput *jati* does not include all Muslims but only those who were warriors and who possessed sovereignty and power equal to or greater than the Hindu Rajput. ....Within Hindu Rajput cultural conceptions, Hindu Rajput service for the Mughal emperor or one of his subordinates was thus no different from service for a local ruler or thakur.'[128] (Ziegler 1998: 202)

Since the patron-client relationship was essentially an unequal one, the Mughals married the Rajput women but never gave their daughters in marriage to Rajput princes. Complementary military cultures brought both material and ideational benefits to the Mughal and Rajputs. Mughal military ethos was not only identifiable to the Rajputs but it also brought them rewards in terms of land grants and high administrative posts.

Co-optation through Normative Reorientation

Mughal intervention led to a restructuring of Rajput social relations by playing up different facets of Rajput identity, and prompted a 'shift in ideology' from corporate egalitarianism to hierarchy. An expanding empire meant greater benefits, and as Rajput stakes in the empire increased, the traditional notions of self-sacrifice as the highest form of service began to lose much of its original appeal. The norm of salvation through continued loyal service was favoured for its perceived compatibility with the privileges of high Mughal rank and land rights. (Gommans 2002: 56)

Normative significance began to be attached to the relative possession of sovereignty as the Rajput society made a transition from an egalitarian order to a more hierarchised system of administration. Rajput dharma expected a clan member to both support his brotherhood and display utmost loyalty to his master. Mughal intervention

[128] The transformation of Akbar's image in the popular Rajput imagination is evident from the following verse composed by a poet in praise of Akbar.

> 'O Akbar, the son of Humayun, you clear my doubts that whose incarnation you are? ... Your charisma is beyond (the understanding) of a *Jogi*, you are not human being but certainly a great incarnation. O Lord of Delhi...tell me who you are out of the four Lakshman, Arjun, Ram and Krishna?' (Cited in Bhadani 1992: 53)

highlighted the latent contradictions that lay in these mutually inconsistent principles. The Mughal intervention in settling succession issues within clans and the support it extended to loyal Rajput subordinates through land grants and rewards consolidated the position of a privileged few over others within the clan. As the patron-client dyadic relations gained strength and brotherhoods disintegrated, Rajputs in control of land sought to transform kinship ties into relations of service. For instance, Rao Maldeo who ruled over Marwar in mid-sixteenth century, attempted to modify this collegial nature of clan structure by introducing changes that rendered it more hierarchical. An assertion of his authority was reinforced by accompanying attempts at reducing the clout of *sardars* and relegating them to the position of subordinates to the clan ruler. *Sardars* could now command control of lands only upon the approval of the ruler and not on the basis of their hereditary claims. To further emphasise their dependence on the ruler, Maldeo began parcelling out land as *pattas* (land revenue grants) to loyalists in return for their compliance. The changes introduced by Maldeo served to make the clan structure vertical in terms of decision-making and control over clan territories, although it proved to be fragile as the disgruntled *sardars* rose up in rebellion after his death. (Sharma 1975: 160-62)

Another indication that the Rajputs were imbibing the Mughal court culture was the increased bureaucratisation of local administration. Written deeds became the basis of legitimate claim to land under Mughals. Notably, the system was first introduced in Jodhpur, whose ruler was closely associated with the Mughals. Gradually, procedures came to be more bureaucratised and formalised in Rajput kingdoms- a visible impact of the Rajput association with the Mughals. A gradual shift was also discernible in the Rajput military ethos as a result of Rajput participation in battles alongside the Mughal armies. The traditional mode of war fighting involving man-to-man combat on foot declined, as a Rajput soldier was increasingly expected to engage in combat on horseback.

Thus one can discern how Rajput notions of honour began to undergo a marked shift, as their participation in an increasingly ritualised and formalised Mughal court intensified. In return for their military service, the Mughals assigned land grants to the Rajputs and thus joining the Mughal service came to be seen as opening up access to land

outside Rajasthan. To the Rajput, loyalty to the master constituted the supreme virtue. Rajput tradition dictated that service to one's patron was akin to worship, and the sacrifice of one's life was the ultimate test of loyalty. As B.L. Bhadani notes,

> 'Sacrifice of life in the battlefield by the Rajput chiefs and of their contingents was considered as the highest expression of their loyalty to their master, Akbar....Sacrificing life in the battlefield for his master became a major mark of merit in contemporary Rajasthani literature.' (Bhadani 1992: 49)

The Rajasthani bardic literature refers to Akbar in lofty terms, addressing him as *shriji*, *nath* and *chhatrapati*. The emperor, portrayed in positive light even in his victory against Rana Pratap, is depicted as an incarnation of Hindu gods possessing godly qualities of Rama and Krishna. Richards observes that

> '[b]y the seventeenth century, after Akbar's initiatives, the Mughal emperors had come to be regarded as essentially Rajputs. Indeed, in some local traditions, the Mughal emperor was equated with Rama himself.' (Richards 1984: 267)

In the bardic poetry, Akbar's territorial expansion is not portrayed as a threat but justified using mythical analogy in terms of Lord Indra's assurance to the gods that the emperor would not invade their domains. The elevation of Akbar's status to that of a Hindu god carried significant import, in that it behove the Rajputs to heed to the moral duty of obeying his orders. (Bhadani 1992: 50) The impression that Akbar's conquests were not to the detriment of Rajput interests; indeed, he had received divine assurance is significant for the acceptance of his legitimate right to rule over their lands. What is also noteworthy is that in the depiction of the historic battle between Rana Pratap and Akbar, neither is glorified or vilified in entirety. Both are shown to be faithful to their call of duty (dharma) and their confrontation is likened to the fight between the mythical heroes and brothers, Karan and Arjun. In victory, Akbar is shown to be appreciative of the gallant Rana, who is glorified as the keeper of Rajput chivalry. (Bhadani 1992: 47-48)

This kind of normative reorientation to the reality of Mughal domination is evident in the local literature of other kingdoms as well. A good example would be the princely state of Orcha in modern day Madhya Pradesh, whose encounter with Mughal power produced pejorative literary images that eventually grew benign with the gradual acceptance of the emperor's supremacy. Allison Busch explores three works in historical

poetry by seventeenth century poet Kesavdas to trace the altered perceptions of Mughal power in Orcha that had come under its sway. The first historical poem (*Ratnabavani*) written in the context of Orcha's defeat in the hands of Akbar in 1570s, valorises Prince Ratnasena in his futile efforts to repel the Mughals who are portrayed as the reviled 'Turks' and 'Mlecchas'. The second work (*Virsimhdevcarit*) written in 1607 is set within the context of court intrigue in both the Orcha and Mughal political orders, and results in the forging of a new alliance between the respective claimants to power. Derogatory connotations attached to 'Turks' now give way to more blurred and nuanced notions of righteousness and villainy, characterised by the shifting sympathies of the poet. The passage in which Kesavdas dwells on Akbar's anguish over the murder of Fazl by the Orcha prince at the behest of his rebellious son Salim is particularly striking. In the third historical poem (*Jahangirjascandrika*), the image of the virtuous Hindu king is eventually transposed on the persona of the Mughal emperor, Jahangir. While on the one hand, Jahangir is 'Hinduised' by his comparison to Raghubira and Rama (allegories employed in praise of the ideal Hindu king), the work itself is 'Mughalised' through the conscious use of Perso-Arabic vocabulary, signifying the cultural acceptance of the Mughals. (Busch 2005: 35-49) Busch rejects the interpretation that the change in imageries occurred on account of shift in power balances, arguing instead that the later literary responses reflected an increasing recognition and inclusion of the Mughals within the matrix of local cultural identities. It is imperative, she argues, to examine the cultural context which impelled

> '...Kesavdas to construct images of the Mughal emperor in terms of this Sanskrit-derived symbolic repertoire of kingship that stemmed back perhaps two millennia in *kavya* and public *prasastis* (panegyric). The historically important point is that for this regional Braj author, in the year 1612, Mughal rule had become fully routinized, and was entirely comprehensible within the traditional Sanskritic episteme of Hindu dharma and kingship. And this was a marked departure from how the Mughals were perceived just 30 years prior in Kesavdas's first work, the *Bavani*, where they were hated interlopers.' (Busch 2005: 47)

The changing metaphors employed for the Mughal emperor in Kesavdas' poems signify the gradual shift that occurred in Rajput perceptions. The initial sense of suspicion and hostility among the Rajputs gave way to a more accommodative and sympathetic perspective that reflected an acceptance of the Mughals as one of their kind. The altered

perceptions were the result of a coherent imperial ideology that was notable for its rhetoric of accommodation, a subject that will be the focus of our study in the next section.

Imperial Ideology: The Rhetoric of Accommodation

Historically, conquest and the establishment of imperial rule were justified in terms of some grand objective and were often regarded as a mark of the king's virility. Justification of conquest in moral terms was not a novel strategy. Philip II desiring status-quo in the neighbourhood, had declared that, 'I would very much like to justify my actions to the whole world and show that I do not lay claim to other states.' He further asserted that 'God is my witness that I have never made war to gain more kingdoms, but only to maintain them in the [Catholic] faith and in peace.' (Parker 1992: 5-6) Likewise, while Mahmud of Ghazni attributed religious significance to his plunder of the subcontinent, Babur claimed India to be the land of his ancestors. With the accession of Akbar, there is a discernible shift in the motive of conquest for the Mughals. Conquest for the first time was legitimised in terms of justice and good governance. It implied the establishment of a just order and his rule was portrayed as the manifestation of peace and harmony for his subjects. (Mukhia 2005: 50) Conquest thus came to be seen as a means towards the establishment of a just system rather than an end in itself.

Accordingly in strategic terms, this implied the justification of the use of force as a means of accommodation. This was in evidence in the conquest of Malwa, which marked the advent of the Mughal empire's expansion under Akbar. As a ruler seeking to establish his hegemony, Akbar sought to justify Malwa's invasion on the basis of righteousness. Malwa's ruler, Baz Bahadur was portrayed as a tyrannical and unjust ruler who engaged in 'unlawful and vicious practices'. Nizamuddin Ahmed justified Akbar's conquest on the grounds that Baz Bahadur

> '...had no care of *(sic)* his kingdom. For this reason the arms of tyrants and oppressors had become long on *faqirs* and on the poor, and...the greater part of the people were stricken almost to death by the hand of his tyranny'.[129] (Cited in Chandra 1999: 103)

[129] Nizamuddin Ahmed was a *bakshi* in Akbar's court.

The moral justification of the conquest that was couched in the rhetoric of righteous rule thus cast Akbar in the role of a liberator. It is important to note that the rhetoric at no point invoked religious principles to justify the invasion, but instead projected Akbar as the upholder of 'secular' universal virtues of justice. The legitimisation of intervention on moral grounds was a crucial step in the establishment of Akbar's hegemonic order.

The Chittor siege in 1567-68 presents a study in contrast. The justification of the attack was marked by religious undertones. Chittor, the capital of the most powerful of Rajput principalities, Mewar, was the largest and most formidable fortress in Hindustan. Mewar had come to be the symbol of Rajput resistance to the Mughals and for this reason, the capture of Chittor held enormous political significance for Akbar. It also explains Akbar's refusal to accept the personal submission of the Rana. The prolonged siege, which resulted in high Rajput casualties finally ended in the capture of the fort. Angered by the Rajput defiance, Akbar declared *jihad* against Rana Udai Singh and the massacre that followed killed 30,000 people. (*TA*: 150) As Streusand notes, 'Akbar's victory at Chittor was the first Mughal success against a major fortress and the only instance of conquest of a major fortress by storm in Mughal history'. (Streusand 1989: 57) The justification of the siege was laden with religious rhetoric contained in the *Fatahnama* that Akbar issued following the conquest. As against the Malwa case where Akbar was portrayed as a king moved by universal principles, the Chittor conquest projected him as a ruler who was implementing a religious sanction. Akbar was projected as being both, the upholder of the universal order and the destroyer of infidels, an all encompassing image that he fostered through his 'ideology of paternalism'.

'The Ideology of Paternalism'

All state policies had to be brought in line with Akbar's grand strategy of accommodation, and accordingly his imperial ideology became the primary means in its pursuit. Inconsistencies and contradictions were ironed out so that every institution of the Mughal state apparatus became an extension and reflection of Akbar's vision. Given the eclectic nature of the Indian ruling elite and the massive military manpower it commanded, Akbar had to devise a strategy to co-opt and not exclude the regional

powers, and that inclusive and universal strategy came to be the 'ideology of paternalism'. Father Monserrate observed of Akbar,

> 'It is hard to exaggerate how accessible he makes himself to all those who wish audience with him. For he creates an opportunity almost everyday for any of the common people or of the nobles to see him and to converse with him; and he endeavours to show himself pleasant-spoken and affable rather than severe toward all who come to speak with him. It is very remarkable how great an effect this courtesy and affability has in attaching to the minds of his subject.' (Monserrate 1922: 197)

Fazl was well aware that he had to formulate a theory of sovereignty that at once set Akbar apart from his subjects, his predecessors and his contemporary rulers and at the same time incorporated all. In short, he had to devise a theory that informed his master's mission and couched his military conquests in moral rhetoric. Fazl observes in the *Ain*,

> 'Just as spiritual leadership requires a regulated mind, capable of controlling covetousness and wrath, so does political leadership depend on an external order of things, on the regulation of the difference among men in rank, and the power of liberality. (*AA*, I: 168)

Fazl carefully crafted the image of Akbar as the Universal Man along the lines of the Sufi thinker Ibn al-Arabi's conception of the Perfect Man. In that endeavour, Akbar went beyond the traditional role envisaged of the king in Islamic kingship, and as Streusand points out,

> 'Akbar's claim to be a spiritual teacher strengthened the perception that he was neither a Muslim nor a Hindu. For Badauni, and for later Shariah-minded Muslims, Akbar's programme removed him from the category of Muslim sovereign and constituted political apostasy.' (Streusand 1999: 151)

Fazl's elevation of Akbar to a distinct position as 'the emanation of God's light' or the extension of the divine force approximates the status of the king within Hindu kingship. A shift away from the position of a Muslim king towards his Hindu counterpart is discernible in Fazl's articulation of Akbar's authority. Fazl's universalism was not dichotomous, in that it was not posited against an outside entity. A universal order did not envisage a relentless war against the infidels but instead sought the attainment of harmonious balance within. Gommans notes that '(t)he most interesting aspect of Akbar's sovereign cult was ... not the tendency to emphasise the exclusive position of the

Mughals, but its almost all-inclusive capacity to incorporate all those willing to serve them.' (Gommans 2002: 56) Indeed, the intertwined nature of the personal and the political realms of kings figures early in Elias' book *The Court Society*. The phenomenon of 'court society', signifying the inextricable link between the imperial court and the society over which it presides, emerged in history with a militarily and politically ascendant state.

In contrast, Philip II institutionalised this dichotomy by constructing two separate domains. The nucleus of his administration comprised of over 4000 people, consisting of officials, staff and their accompanying families. The unwieldy number was a hindrance to mobility and made Philip to locate his government machinery in Madrid in 1561. His rather public and ostentatious court was in sharp contrast to his more informal reclusive retreats where he would retire to occasionally. (Parker 1992: 17) The Valecian royal councillor Fadrique Furio Ceriol noted in 1559,

> 'Every prince is made up, as it were, of two persons: the first, the natural person, is fashioned by the hands of nature and as such is given the same essence as other human beings. The other is a gift of fortune and the favour of heaven, created to govern and protect the public good, for which reason we call it the public person... Each and every prince may therefore be considered in two distinct ways: as a man and as a sovereign.' (Cited in Parker 1992: 17)

Fazl's formulation of universalism blended with Akbar's grand strategy of accommodation. Akbar realised that the Mughal state could not be accommodationist and theocratic at the same time. A theocracy in its orthodox functioning is often unyielding towards minority communities under its rule. Religion becomes the primary referent as the state seeks to sustain its religious identity through conversions and the implementation of religious laws. However, historically Islamic power in South Asia has focused on the extension of territorial control rather than on intensification through conversion. The fact that the Muslim populations were not concentrated around the central areas of Muslim control was indicative of the absence of state-run conversion programme under either the Sultanate rulers or the Mughals. (Metcalf and Metcalf 2002: 6)

Akbar realised the need to personalise and secularise his authority so as to appeal to his heterogeneous subjects. As Gordon notes, men were rewarded with 'non-Islamic

symbols' such as 'the personal robes of the Emperor, turban jewels, swords, horses and decorated quivers, never with Korans'.[130] (Gordon 1994: 190) Although induction into the Mughal nobility required the assimilation of the court culture, it did not entail conversion to Islam, 'a phenomenon whose parallel would have been inconceivable under the Habsburgs...and somewhat difficult under the Ottomans.' (Subrahmanyam 2006: 83) The Mughal state was not a theocratic state on two critical counts. Firstly, conversion was not a state policy, and secondly, the *Sharia* was not the sole basis of jurisprudence. (Mukhia 2005: 38-40; Ali 1992: 134) Conversion was ordered as a form of punishment to those guilty of serious crimes, whereby the emperor pardoned death penalty on the condition that the offender should convert to Islam. Akbar made such an offer to Hemu after the latter's defeat at Panipat in 1556, one which he rejected and was subsequently put to death.

Notwithstanding conversion under duress, the Mughal state did not systematically pursue a policy of proselytisation and non-Muslim officers seldom faced such a predicament. Moreover, the *Sharia* was not the sole basis of all laws. The *Sharia* ruled in matters pertaining to criminal justice, whereas civil law cases were governed by religious codes of respective communities. This tendency to resist attributing events to religious causes was reflected in Mughal historiography as well. Compared to the Sultanate period, the historians of the Mughal era did not attribute the shortcomings in non-Muslims to their religious disposition. For instance, a typical description of Hemu in his clash with Akbar was restricted to branding him as arrogant and haughty, character defects that had little to do with his status as a non-believer. (Hardy 1983: 170) Summing up on the tenor of Indo-Persian writings regarding violence, Hardy writes that the notion of the Muslim ruler as the keeper of peace and stability within the system

> '...was embodied in the *shari'a* of Islam or, as in the work of Abu'l Fazl in Akbar's reign, [embodied in] the ruler's God-endowed perceptions of justice as an equilibrium between men of different God-given qualities, capacities and needs-

[130] Interestingly, the *Ain* makes no direct reference to Islam, which is referred to as 'Ahmadi kesh' or the Mohammedan doctrine. The term, which Akbar invented, does not figure in any other Persian text, further emphasising the fact that the emperor had sought to distance himself and his authority from formalised conceptualisations of all religions. (Ali 1983: 125)

and perhaps of beliefs also. Force is legitimate in the service of the system of values.' (Hardy 1983: 201-202)

Locating the use of force within the larger discourse on righteousness and peace was in keeping with Akbar's image as the upholder of balance and harmony in society. He consciously sought to elevate his position above particularistic identities, while at the same time seeking to make his persona identifiable to a broad spectrum of society. Among the many measures that aided Akbar in this endeavour, and pursuing which he believed would be for the betterment of his people, was 'the path of reason'. The subsequent section will look at why Akbar privileged the faculty of reason in his pursuit of peace and stability.

The Path of Reason

Akbar's military campaigns were portrayed as the progressive realisation of the state of *sulh-i kul* (absolute peace). Bearing greater affinity to the *Sufi* and *Bhakti* sects than to orthodox Islam or Hinduism, *sulh-i kul* appealed to reason over blind faith. Akbar had asserted that, 'The pursuit of reason and the rejection of traditionalism are so brilliantly patent as to be above the need of argument.' (*AA* III: 179) His recitation of the *khutbah* in 1579, commonly seen as an assertion of Islamic sovereignty, must be seen in the larger context of his efforts to break away from the orthodoxies of the *ulema*.[131] The contents of the declaration allowed Akbar greater independence in determining matters of religious jurisprudence, traditionally reserved for the caliphs, than being an enforcer of the *Sharia* would have allowed him. Given that Akbar wished to be released from the encumbrance of heeding to the advice of the *ulema*, which he found increasingly to be untenable and orthodox, his move to redefine his role in the *khutbah* reveals a new dimension of his religious policy. Indeed, this overtly religious initiative to break away from religious orthodoxy eventually became the basis for Akbar's syncretic cult. (Streusand 1999: 118-119)

[131] The *khutbah* also contained the term 'Allahu Akbar' which could be interpreted to mean either 'God is Great' or that 'God is Akbar'. The duality was perhaps intentional, since it permitted the allegory of Akbar as God's prophet, a metaphor that further distanced him from the *ulema*.

Social strife signified the absence of *sulh-i kul,* and was brought about by blind imitation of practices. Accordingly, if peace and harmony were to be restored, retrograde practices and rituals had to be purged. Thus, convinced of the need for reform, Akbar prohibited *Sati,* condemned child marriage and abolished the *Jizya* tax on non-Muslims stressing that such social ills were contrary to reason. For Akbar,

> '[t]he path of reason (*Rahi Aql*) facilitated dialogue and mediation among various cultures and thereby fostered religious tolerance. Under the patronage of Akbar, discussion involving Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Jains and Parsis were arranged, laying the foundation of a secular Indian state that observed religious neutrality.' (Sen 2005: 289)

Clearly, reason being a universal attribute was the supreme consideration for Akbar. In a pluralistic setting, reason was to be the unifying force in society, and its pursuit alone could help the emperor achieve a harmonious social balance. Fazl articulates the ideal state of being, in which the principle of reason prevails as the supreme arbiter of differences.

> 'The inner and external conflicts should turn into amity, the thorn-bush of enmity and hostility into the garden of friendship and the sounds of reasoned arguments should come forth and an informed assemblage be arranged.' (Cited in Ali 1997: 223)

Further emphasising the inclusive character of *sulh-i kul,* Jahangir wrote,

> 'Let the disciples never make their own time dark and disturbed by the hostility against any religion (*millat*) from amongst the religions; with men of all faiths, let them follow the path of *Sulh-i Kul* (Absolute Peace).' (Cited in Ali 1983: 127)

Although the underlying spirit of *Din-i Ilahi* and *Sulh-i kul* were the same, namely acknowledging the spiritual supremacy of Akbar and an adherence to reason, the two served very different purposes. *Din-i Ilahi* was to be observed and followed by a select number of disciples who were chosen by the emperor himself, whereas by seeking to put *Sulh-i kul* into practice through his policies, Akbar was in effect articulating the ideational dimension of his grand strategy. *Sulh-i kul* was the ideological extension of Akbar's strategy of accommodation, wherein conflict was a transient state of affairs and not a perpetual one. Under *Sulh-i kul*, differences were reconciled to achieve the dynamic state of harmony that could be realistically referred to as the successful consolidation of his empire. Savitri Chandra contends that the concept was a reflection of the prevailing

intellectual milieu in which prominent *bhakti* saints like Tusi and Dadu propounded moderation in their writings. (Chandra 1992: 35) Differentiating between the notions of *Din-i Illahi* and *Sulh-i kul*, Streusand argues, '*Din-i Illahi* did not replace Islam as Akbar's sovereign cult; *Sulh-i kul* (general peace) did.' (Streusand 1999: 122) As the prevailing normative notion, *Sulh-i kul* came to inform imperial measures in all areas of royal administration through which it was implemented. (Ali 1983: 127)

By its very nature, accommodation implied limitations on the exercise of power. The challenge that lay before Fazl was that having created an aura of divinity around Akbar, the limitations on his sovereignty could not be attributed to external causes. Since Akbar was projected as a divinely ordained emperor, the constraints on his power were not externally induced but instead were inherent to his capacities. As Mukhia notes,

> 'The king's absolute power then gets circumscribed by the responsibility to establish absolute peace among his subjects through the practice of non-discrimination, and to bring about tranquillity and prosperity through paternalistic care.' (Mukhia 2005: 52)

Akbar's responsibility towards his subjects and his goal of ensuring harmony were hence inherently self-limiting.

Fazl's writings are as much a celebration of loyalty as a virtue, as it is of Akbar's divine sovereignty. The most virtuous of all are those who have unconditional loyalty to the emperor, whereas the less noble ones are those who seek to draw benefit from their loyal service. The ones who are disloyal and contemptuous of the emperor's authority are the most condemned rebellions and hence need to be vanquished. (Mukhia 2005: 50) Fazl's gradation approximates most analyses of power dynamics. While cooperation through socialisation and normative persuasion elicits absolute loyalty, interest-based cooperation is more tactical and prone to vacillation as there is a constant revaluation of gains and losses. Cooperation elicited through purely coercive means is what Fazl refers to as the 'cleansing operation' against the rebels. It is the least virtuous of all to Fazl, precisely because it is hardly a cost-effective means of keeping control and hence, the least desirable of all possibilities.

Conclusion

The subjugation and the subsequent enculturation of the Rajput elite point to the successful formulation of hegemonic ideas by Akbar and the consolidation of his empire. The case study serves to demonstrate the fact that the ideational facet of hegemony is as important as the material foundation upon which it is erected. Enhanced Rajput participation in imperial affairs, albeit initially for instrumental reasons, brought about a discernible shift in their value orientations. It attests to the fact that socialisation performs a systemic function, namely that of order maintenance and hence, is not entirely reducible to a materialist understanding of power. The second case study on Mughal relations with the Deccani powers seeks to bring out the fragile balance of power at the empire's fringes, owing to its coercive strategy that was devoid of any cultural appeal.

B. MUGHAL COERCIVE STRATEGY: THE DECCAN CASE STUDY

By the parameters of Mughal hegemony outlined above, the states in the Deccan fell beyond the pale of the thick web of interactions that marked off the areas surrounding the imperial core. The Deccani states were located on the empire's fringes, the contours of which were beginning to emerge from the consolidation process. The sheer distance and the concern of empire building delayed imperial encounters with the southern states. The second case study on the Deccani states would serve to illustrate the working of a coercive strategy within the broad rubric of accommodation. The southward shift in the focus reveals a different set of dynamics in motion wherein the material aspect of Mughal hegemony was predominant and its ideational facet muted to relative insignificance. The Mughal-Deccan encounters could not proceed beyond the initial phase of attacks and retreats and thus, Mughal control whenever gained remained tentative. The distance factor was further compounded by an absence of cultural affinity between the Deccan powers and the Mughals.

As we have seen, complementary value systems had been instrumental in forging long-lasting ties of loyalty with the Rajputs. Similar belief systems facilitated engagement as the hegemonic practices and values that Akbar's strategy of socialisation entailed were identifiable to the Rajputs. In the Rajput case, material aspect of hegemony was reinforced by the ideational aspect to ensure normative persuasion. The Rajput elites

came to accept Mughal domination as legitimate, and the cooperation they extended was not tactical and calculative, but based on normative identification with hegemonic values. Socialisation, by ensuring that the value orientations of the Rajputs were compatible with Akbar's normative claims, pre-empted the resort to coercion to settle differences. The prerequisite to socialisation, as the previous case study demonstrates, is participation in the hegemonic system which draws in subject actors through a complex web of interactions. Ikenberry and Kupchan rightly note that

> '[t]hrough frequent participation in the institutions erected by the hegemon, elites in secondary states are exposed to and may eventually embrace the norms and value orientations that these institutions embody.' (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990: 292)

As the second case study would seek to establish, the Deccan states were not coopted into the military and administrative system as the Rajputs were. Their marginalisation, as the next section will demonstrate, was the function of their peripheral location from the locus of power in the north.

Distance as a variable in Mughal-Deccan relations

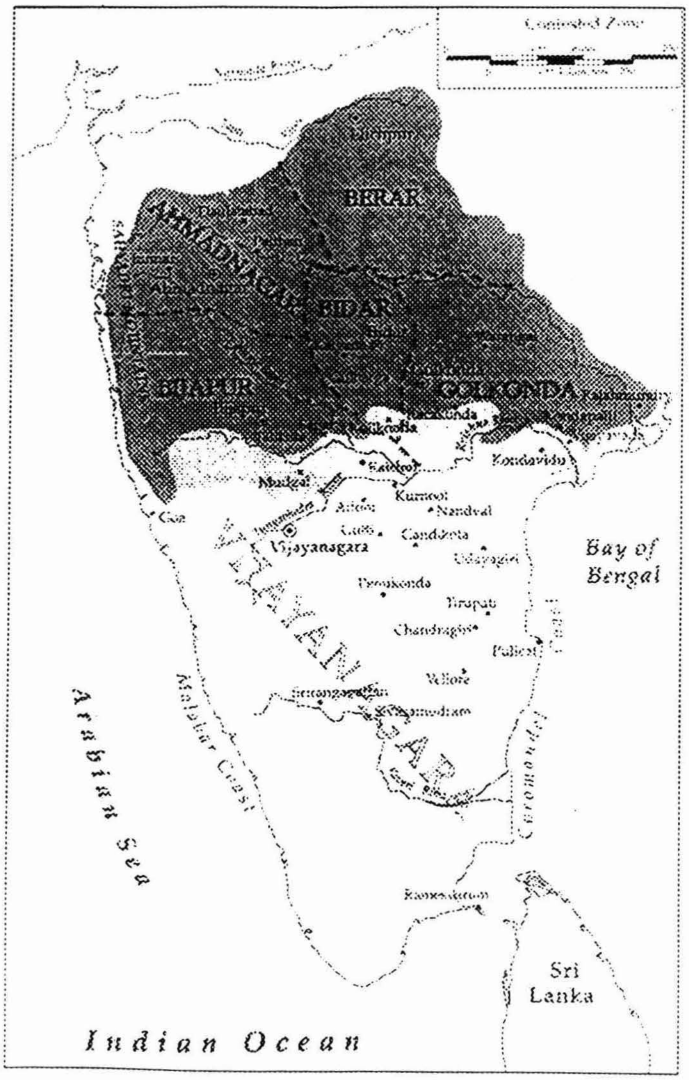
The primacy of location in the expansion process of empires is corroborated by a number of scholars, albeit from different perspectives. Schwartzberg notes that

> '...many small and medium-sized states have survived over much of Indian history merely by virtue of their remoteness from the contemporary principal centers of political and military power. This is, of course, what accounts for the continuation of [the Deccan states of] Bijapur and Golkonda as independent entities well beyond the time when the Mughals attained pan-Indian status.'(Schwartzberg 1992: 259)

The pattern of marginalisation that Schwartzberg outlined did not remain merely a matter of geographical disadvantage. Schwartzberg's geopolitical analysis on the likelihood of certain regions to dominate and of others to submit is corroborated by Gommans' observation on the areas covered by the imperial perambulations of the Mughals. The radius of approximately 1200 kms from the imperial capital that was covered by the mobile imperial camp roughly coincided with the regions from where pan-Indian and supra-regional powers had historically emerged in the subcontinent. This covered the area that comprised of the north-west region that has historically been the seat of political

power through the major historical periods. Regions such as the south and the north east which fell outside the pale of imperial socialisation were also the ones which witnessed low levels of political activity in terms of the emergence of pan-Indian and supra-regional powers. These regions were brought into the imperial fold relatively late, as the Mughal southward expansion began once the northern and north-western areas around the centre had been secured. Given the nature of the fluctuating boundaries of an expanding empire, the Deccan located at its fringes saw more wars and battles than the pacified core.

Map 5 : The Deccan, 1565



Source: Richard Eaton (2005), *The New Cambridge History of India: A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761, Eight Indian Lives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Another indicator against which this perspective can be tested is the composition of the Mughal nobility. A look at the geographical representation of the regions brought under Mughal subjugation reveals an imbalance in favour of the core areas. The Rajputs constituted a sizeable chunk of the total number of mansabdars, whereas the Deccan states went largely underrepresented even after they were brought under Mughal control. The Rajputs and other Hindus together made up over 22 per cent of the high ranking nobles within imperial service. (Khan 2001: 30) In contrast, Gordon notes that not even one Maratha was inducted into the mansabdari system between 1600 and 1630, which were the early decades of Mughal forays into the Deccan. (Gordon 1994: 205) The marginalisation of the Marathas from the imperial system was indicative of their peripheral status within the empire as their region was one of the outposts of imperialism in Indian history. The peripheral location was further compounded by the military ethos of the Marathas, who did not share similar belief systems with the Mughals as the Rajputs did.

Deccan history remains an understudied aspect of the Mughal era of expansion, and one of the reasons for this lacuna is the lack of reliable sources on relations between the Mughals and the Deccan Sultanates. The only extensive Mughal account is that of Fazl, which ends with his death in 1602. The subsequent years during which time the Mughals were further drawn into Deccan politics are not sufficiently elaborated even in Deccan chronicles. Deccani sources on the Mughal period are also found to be wanting in this regard. The unavailability of reliable source material has been a major factor behind the understudied nature of the region. Comparatively, Rajput history is much richer in terms of historical accounts available to the researcher and hence it is no surprise that there is far more secondary material available on the Rajputs than on the Decccan powers. Moreover, the paucity of research material has caused discrepancies to creep into accounts on Deccan history, and thus any attempt at tracing the history of the Sultanates has to be approached tentatively. Consequently, the fragments of Mughal relations with the Sultanate kingdoms are pieced together from references in Persian, Deccani and Portuguese literature.

Deccan is referred to in epics like the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* as Dakshinapatha, commonly implying the land south of the river Narmada and the Satpura

range of mountains. Khandesh, as the Tapti region in northern Deccan was known, was the gateway to the rest of the Deccan peninsula. According to Ferishta, 'Dakhan the son of Hind had three sons and the country of Dakhan was divided among them. Their names are Marath [Maharashtra], Kanhar [Karnataka] and Tilang [Andhra]. At present these races reside in the Dakhan.' (Cited in Sherwani 1974: 4) Ahmadnagar was ruled by the Nizamshahi dynasty, which came into being with Malik Ahmed declaring himself as Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri. The removal of the names of the Bahamani rulers from the *khutba* and striking coins in his name were evident signs of secession. The history of Deccan politics is that of incessant strife and fluid alignments, the predominant conflict being between the Sultanates of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.

Compared to the Mughal alliance with the Rajputs, the Deccan case study is a picture in contrast where cooperation was evinced on the sole basis of coercion and the stabilising element of socialisation was absent in the Mughal efforts to draw the Deccani states within the empire's fold. Schwartzberg notes that

> '...in subjugating the last significant Deccani states, the overextended Mughal power became unable to counter effectively the rising military threat of the Marathas and subsequently to maintain the allegiance of ambitious provincial governors, especially those on the periphery of the empire.'(Schwartzberg 1992: 259)

The lack of normative persuasion is evident in the constant realignments of Mughal-Deccan power configuration. The political fluidity is typical of a system in which the actors base their allegiances solely on calculated interest rather than on perceptions of legitimate dominance. Thus, the picture that begins to emerge is of shifting alliances in the Deccan that were tactical responses to changes in the military balance of power. As a result, Mughal rule on the southern fringes remained tenuous and was constantly negotiated. However, before analysing the nature of Mughal forays in the Deccan, it would be instructive to look at a brief history of the region and its key players.

The Material Setting

The five Deccan states emerged from the ruins of the first Muslim state in Deccan history, the Bahmani kingdom. Established in the fourteenth century, the Bahmanids ruled for over a century before it began to disintegrate under Sultan Muhammad Shah IV.

The first to break away were Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Berar in 1490, followed by Bidar and finally, Golconda in 1518. The territories of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda were contiguous with their adjoining linguistic domains of Marathi, Kannada and Telugu. The Faruqis of Khandesh, which was situated on the northern part of the Deccan region outlasted the Bahmanis and survived through the sixteenth century. The fractured region was prone to instability and conflict, as was evident from the fluctuating allegiances and intrigues that characterised relations among the Deccan Sultanates. However, discernable patterns of role-playing emerge from the apparently chaotic political scenario. For instance, the central conflict was between two key adversaries, Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. The rest of the regional players were arranged around this particular dyad. While Golconda attempted to maintain a political balance between the two rivals, Bidar sought to secure itself by playing off the two. For his reputation to instigate the Deccan rulers against one another and foment trouble, Amir Barid who ruled Bidar came to be known as the 'Fox of the Deccan' (Joshi 1974: 318)

The Cultural Context

The Hindu and Muslim monarchs who reigned over the Deccan were structurally similar in their functioning. Their centralised mode of functioning could be attributed to a host of factors unique to the region. The Deccan witnessed intermittent warfare among the Sultanates which viewed one another with mutual suspicion. The powers were engaged in a set of shifting alliances that rendered the political climate in the region fluid and uncertain. Regional instability was further compounded by the collective awareness of their vulnerability to attack from northern India. Furthermore, according to the kingship theory, the position of the ruler was lower only to that of the lord. The moral force of the theory which expected the people to obey him provided the Sultans with a strong basis of legitimacy and social acceptance. The conjunction of these factors enabled the monarch to rule with a firm hand in the Deccan.

Since the king was seen as the representative of God on earth, his coronation was loaded with religious significance. The religious leaders appointed the ruler and also played an instrumental role in settling succession disputes. Their support to the Sultan was considered invaluable in aiding him to gain legitimacy among contending factions

and the masses. Usually, succession issues were determined along religious and racial lines, and outcomes based on these tended to be both stable and lasting. However, times of transition from one regime to another saw brief periods of fluidity when contending religious and racial identities vied for power and precipitated the downfall of an established order. An illustrative example would be the rebellion of the five Bahamani governors belonging to diverse backgrounds, paving the way for the downfall of the Bahamani kingdom and the establishment of the five successor states in the Deccan. (Sherwani 1974a: 478-479)

Irrespective of their religious persuasions, the Deccani rulers were careful in observing the religious codes that laid down the prerogatives and duties of the king. Texts such as the Quran and the Vedas were seen as sources of legitimacy and adherence to these assured the kings of popular support. Eliciting cooperation through the observance of the sacred was a common practice in the Deccan and is akin to such similar exercises that Mughal rulers carried out, albeit on a larger scale. The Deccan states were structured on the lines of the institutions of the Delhi Sultanate, although they came to develop strong religious ties with the Abbasid Khalifas. George Michell and Mark Zebrowski noted that the 'Deccani kings perceived the Safavid state as the source of their own legitimacy and the Sunni Mughal empire as their enemy.' (Michell and Zebrowski 1999:2) The Deccani powers were splinter states that emerged from the downfall of the Bahamani empire, which had itself broken away from the Tughlaq empire through a successful rebellion to its power in the Deccan. (Sherwani 1974a: 474) Although the Deccani states were predominantly Islamic, their rulers often belonged to different religious dispositions. For instance, whereas the Bahamani kingdom, Berar and Bidar were Sunni by disposition, the rulers of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golconda followed the Shia faith, although the early years saw Ahmadnagar and Bijapur follow Sunni persuasion. (Sherwani 1974a: 483) That the 'learned divines' cast considerable influence on the religious disposition of the Sultans is evident from the conversion of Nizamshahi ruler Burhan from Sunni to Shia faith at the instance Shah Tahir. The Deccani states were ridden with factionalism, particularly between the Dakhni and the Afaqi nobles. The tensions were further compounded by the fact that the two factions were divided on the

religious issue, with Dakhni nobles following the Sunni sect and the Afaqis being of Shia disposition.

The Middle Eastern culture had a deep impact on the Deccani culture, and its distinct elements set it off from the Islamic culture that developed in North India. Cultural affinities with the Middle East that resulted from centuries of prolonged interaction through saints, merchants and soldiers, are reflected in the architectural marvels and artistic works of the Deccan. Art as a medium of cultural expression brings out the contrasting cultural dispensations that were celebrated in Mughal and Deccani courts, which are highlighted by art historian Zebrowski.[132]

> 'Few Deccani paintings record historical events or realistically portray their subjects as Mughal art does. Nor was there much interest in the thrills of the hunt, court ceremonial or Hindu ritual, favourite Rajasthani themes. Instead, princely portraits predominate which aim to establish a gently lyrical atmosphere, often one of quiet abandon to the joys of love, music, poetry or just the perfume of a flower.... We are admitted into a private world of feeling... [and] rarely do we see an army on the march. Reflection and reverie triumph over dramatic action.' (Zebrowski 1983: 10)

Part of the influence also had to do with the ties that the Deccani dynasties claimed with the region, either on religious or ancestral grounds The Adil Shah dynasty of Bijapur traced familial ties to the Ottoman dynasty of Istanbul, whereas Golconda's Qutb Shahis were descendants of Turkman princes who fled Iran during the fifteenth century. Safavid [illegible]'s influence increased with the capture of Iran in 1501, and with it the prominence of [illegible] [illegible]hell and Zebrowski observe,

> '[illegible] the Middle East, in fact, seems to have informed many aspects of Deccani culture. The sultans identified with Iranian and Turkish rulers, adopting their ceremonial practices and patterns of patronage. The ethnic composition of the Deccan was the result of sustained contacts with the Middle East, with large and influential communities of Turks, Persians, Arabs and Africans.' (Michell and Zebrowski 1999: 2)

Despite their avowed allegiance to the *Sharia*, the Deccani states were not exclusionist in practice. Non-Muslims not only filled the rank and file of the state

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[132] Mughal art drew on the influences of European style, evident from the painting of St. Matthew by Kesu Das in 1588 in which the subject and the motifs used are distinctly European. Indeed, European art became one of the significant benchmarks against which Mughal skills were gauged. (Beach 1992: 55) For more on European influences on Mughal court culture, see Burke 2005: 59-63.

administration, but also occupied important positions in the political system. Hindus were left free to practice their religion without state control. Indeed, the Brahmins received state favours in terms of appointments to high offices and as advisors on matters of astrological significance. The force and legitimacy of local customs was acknowledged by the Deccan Sultans who did not attempt to interfere in their influence and pull. In matters of civil law, the state did not impose the *Sharia* on the Hindu populace who were free to observe the *Shastras*. However, the state intervened in the case of criminal law, the application of which saw little discrimination on religious grounds. The Sultan was also not seen to be above the laws laid down by the *Sharia*, and all Deccan rulers persevered to adhere to its tenets to the extent possible. (Sherwani 1974a: 490-93)

The Politics in the Deccan

The Bahmani kingdom, control over which had been wrested by the governor of Bidar, gradually disintegrated into five successor states over a span of 25 years. Ahmadnagar was the first to cede from the Bahmani kingdom after overcoming the army sent by Bidar and Bijapur. The new Sultanate born under Ahmad Nizam al-Mulk adopted the Shia faith. Ahmadnagar was to later align itself with Golconda and Vijayanagar against Bijapur. Following the conquest of Berar in 1574, Murtaza I (1565-88) continued his campaign to the north in Khandesh, where his march ended with an encounter with the Mughal forces in 1586. In an effort to gain a foothold in the Deccan, Akbar extended support to Murtaza's successor, Burhan II (1591-5). The annexation of Berar to the Mughal empire in 1596 was a precursor to the eventual integration of Ahmadnagar itself in 1600. Both forays into Ahmadnagar took advantage of the political instability and court intrigue that plagued the Nizam Shahi dynasty. (Michell and Zebrowski 1999: 11)

Yusuf Adil Khan established the Deccani state of Bijapur in 1490 when the Bahmani governor declared rebellion on the declining kingdom. Yusuf concluded a marriage alliance with the son of the Bahmani ruler, Mahmud Shah in a bid to gain in influence over the other Deccan Sultanates. However, in 1503 the Deccan states of Ahmadnagar and Golconda aligned against Bijapur under the leadership of Qasim Barid of Bidar. Berar's efforts at averting war in the Deccan paid off when it succeeded in convincing Yusuf to retract from his new religious policy of following Shi'ism. The

spectre of a similar alliance formation against the other two Deccani states at the instance of Bidar deterred Ahmadnagar and Golconda from continuing to support the possible confrontation. Yusuf's death in 1510 resulted in the recapture of Goa by the Portuguese who had been steadily gaining a foothold in coastal Deccan since their arrival by sea in 1498. The Portuguese were aware of their strong bargaining position against Bijapur which like the other Deccan Sultanates did not possess naval powers to match their prowess. The assumption of power by Ismail Adil Khan ended the influence that the Dakhani faction of nobles wielded, and with that the state reverted to Shia faith. (Joshi 1974: 299-307)

The death of the last Bahmani ruler in 1538 ended the notional allegiance that Bijapur owed to him. Ibrahim Adil Shah as the new ruler of Bijapur signalled a shift not only in terms of the assumption of full sovereign powers over his state, but also a reversal of the religious policies of his predecessors with the establishment of Sunni practices. However, Bijapur's change of faith was preceded by a similar move in Ahmadnagar, in this case to Shi'ism. The conflicting religious inclinations further exacerbated political tensions between the two states. Although Ahmadnagar managed to scuttle Bijapur's plan to carve up its territory among Gujarat, Khandesh and Bijapur, the attempt worsened an already vitiated atmosphere.

Burhan Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar was not satisfied with the compromise he had arrived at with Ibrahim, and soon set about forming a counter-alliance in 1543 with Vijayanagar, Golconda and Bidar. The military attack left Bijapur with little choice but to cede Sholapur to Ahmadnagar in return for cessation of hostilities. (Joshi 1974: 319) The cold response Ahmadnagar's envoy received at the court of the new ruler Ali Barid angered Burhan who took control of three Baridi forts including one at Qandhar in 1545. The wresting of Baridi forts brought Bijapur to its aid but was repeatedly repulsed by Burhan's forces. Burhan's death in 1553 resulted in a change in the political scenario in the Deccan, as Vijayanagara shifted allegiance from Ahmadnagar to Bijapur. However, new rulers were at the helm of affairs as Ibrahim's death in 1558 brought a succession change in Bijapur as well. From 1559, the combined forces of Bijapur and Vijayanagar fought Ahmadnagar for three years which received help from Golconda and Berar intermittently.

The Deccan Sultanates came together to form a confederacy against Vijayanagar, which they realised was playing up one Sultan against the other to make territorial gains for itself. In 1564, Ahmadnagar took the initiative, and through an envoy to Bijapur suggested a marital alliance between Husain Nizam Shah's daughter Chand Bibi and Ali Adil Shah. The alliance was to be further reinforced by another marriage between Ali's sister and Husain's son. Ahmadnagar agreed to give Sholapur in dowry to Bijapur upon the solemnisation of the marriage between the two families. Husain had already got the approval of Golconda and when Bidar also extended its support to the confederacy, Vijayanagar found itself beleaguered by the rest. The weddings sealed the pact between the Sultans who mobilised their forces for war against Vijayanagar soon after.

In the battle of Bannihatti in 1565, the combined might of the Sultanates defeated the Vijayanagari forces that marked the end of its ruler, Ramaraj's reign. Ahmadnagar and Bijapur came together once more against another adversary who had wrested their territorial assets- the Portuguese. The assault proved futile and Bijapur which had laid siege on Goa was forced to conclude a peace pact with the Portuguese in 1571. Subsequent treaties allowed Bijapur to conduct sea trade through Goa upon the payment of the stipulated customs. (Joshi 1974: 333-34) Bijapur and Ahmadnagar entered into a pact of non-interference, whereby Adil Shah could pursue his expansionist policy in Karnatak on the assurance that Ahmadnagar would remain neutral in the ensuing struggle. In return, Ahmadnagar was assured by Bijapur that it would not come in the way of the annexation of Bidar and Berar. Although Ahmadnagar managed to seize Berar, its ruler Murtaza Nizam Shah was assassinated in 1580 before it could annex Bidar.

The Mughal Initiatives in the Deccan

Although the initial Mughal forays into Deccan were tentative in nature, the peace initiatives in the region came early in Akbar's reign. Having consolidated his position in the north, he turned his attention to the south in 1564. Strategically, the southward turn was only inevitable given the fact that Akbar was keen on securing access to the Gujarat ports as well as countering the growing threat of an expanding Portuguese power. The solemnisation of a marital alliance with the ruler of Khandesh was the first step for Akbar

in that direction, following which he sent his envoys to the Deccan. In 1575, the Mughal envoy was granted an audience with Ali Adil Shah who, upon hearing of the diplomatic overtures, despatched his representative to the Mughal court offering his submission.

The Mughal role was tactical in the early phase, intervening to settle the succession issue in Ahmadnagar. Akbar intervened on the behalf of Burhan in the succession struggle that ensued after the assassination of his brother Murtaza Nizam Shah in 1588. Akbar sought to utilise the opportunity to establish a stable link with Ahmadnagar by inducting Burhan into the Mughal nobility as a *mansabdar* in 1584. However, even as Mughal involvement in Deccan affairs increased, the policy did not veer off the course of accommodation. This is evident from the fact that even after Ahmadnagar was annexed to the Mughal empire in 1600, Akbar did not formally declare either its annexation or the end of the Nizamshahi dynasty that had ruled over the erstwhile kingdom. Moreover, the earliest expeditions to the southern states were not military expeditions that reflected a confrontationist approach. Rather, Akbar's diplomatic missions were indicative of the willingness to accommodate the Sultanate states within the imperial fold provided they submitted to his authority. The annexation of Ahmadnagar did not see the Mughals launch a full-scale offensive against the rest of the Deccan kingdoms. It was followed by diplomatic missions to the neighbouring kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur, assuring them of Akbar's intention to maintain the delicate balance of power in the Deccan.

Having secured the submission of Bijapur, Akbar sent diplomatic envoys to the other Deccan powers as well. His envoys reached Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Hyderabad and Bijapur in 1591, the last mission supposed to return with a reiteration of support that Ali Adil Shah had pledged towards the end of his reign. The diplomatic missions returned two years later with rejections from all courts. Although Akbar decided to launch a military offensive in the Deccan to compel them into submission, he delegated the responsibility to Prince Daniyal. Of all the Deccan powers, Ahmadnagar proved to be the most vulnerable due to internal factionalism that had arisen to challenge the authority of Chand Bibi. (Sherwani 1974b: 274) It was but natural for the Mughal prince to begin by attacking Ahmadnagar which urgently sought the help of Bijapur and Golconda. The

battle of Sonpat took place in 1597 in which despite initial reversals, the Mughal forces managed to beat back the combined forces of the three Deccan powers.

Due to internal differences in the military command, the Mughal forces failed to capitalise on their victory and the Deccan states were spared from annexation to the empire. However, the battle made Golconda and Bijapur realise that their power was ineffective against the military might of the Mughals. Although both decided to send peace envoys to Akbar's court, they stopped short of offering complete submission. The emissaries were meant to ensure that the Deccan states did not get assimilated into the empire, a motivation that explains their disinterest in recognising the suzerainty of the Mughals. Thus, although Mughal forays into the Deccan were initially tentative in nature, these were not devoid of territorial ambitions. The relentless attacks on Ahmadnagar were meant to compel it to cede with Berar which it had annexed to its own territories. Although Ahmadnagar submitted to Mughal rule and Berar was ceded by Chand Bibi in 1596, relations between the imperial court and Ahmadnagar remained strained till 1600 when finally Ahmadnagar was annexed to the Mughal empire. Golconda was forced to submit to Mughal supremacy in 1636 and consequently, Sunni faith was declared as the state religion. The dynastic rule of the Qutb Shahis eventually ended with the capture and death of Abul Hasan in 1687. (Michell and Zebrowski 1999: 18) Mughal advances into the Deccan were also viewed with unease by the Portuguese. Their suspicions of Akbar's southern ventures is evident from Vidigueira's comment after the death of Burhan,

> '...there arose such a division in the Kingdom that Equebar profiting from this facility has subjected most of it, which would not have happened nor would the Mughal have attempted it had the King Melique [Burhan Nizam Shah II of Ahmadnagar] been alive...'(Cited in Subrahmanyam 1998: 177)

Akbar attempted to infuse greater stability in Mughal-Deccan relations by using means that had been successful with the Rajputs. Marital alliances in conjunction with other instruments of socialisation had been enormously successful in transforming interest-based cooperation into normative support, thereby securing the lasting loyalty of the Rajputs. In order to convince Akbar of his intentions, Ibrahim Adil Shah, the ruler of the most powerful Deccan state of Bijapur offered his daughter in a marital alliance to Prince Daniyal. By accepting the proposal in 1604, Akbar attempted to replicate the

success of incorporating the Rajputs with the Deccan states. However, the mission to the Deccan remained incomplete due to the long absence of the Mughal envoy to the region who failed to report to the court for extended periods of time. (Joshi 1974: 344-45) In 1605, although a new diplomatic mission was sent to the Sultanates, it proved ineffective as Akbar died before any arrangement could be put in place in the region. Akbar's designs of conquering the Deccan remained unrealised and it fell upon his son, Jahangir to bring the region under the Mughal banner.

However, the lack of other institutionalised means of enculturation led to the failure of these isolated cases of cooperative ventures. This was compounded by Daniyal's untimely death that terminated the nascent marital alliance Akbar had established with Bijapur. Thus, it was no surprise that the Mughals never got a chance to consolidate their position in Deccan. Sanjay Subrahmanyam called the Deccan campaigns as the 'true war of attrition' that tested the limits of Mughal accommodation. (Subrahmanyam 1998: 172) The sheer distance of the Deccan region from the centre had compelled Akbar to delay sending any mission there, although he had been toying with the idea from 1577. Materially and hence, militarily campaigns would have meant a long haul from where the seat of power was. Unlike Rajputana which was more accessible given its proximity to the centre, Deccan lay outside the imperial pale. Any attempt to draw the states into the empire's fold would have meant stretching the supply lines too far. Hence, distance as a factor played an important role in delaying the southward move till the 1590s.

The Ideational Aspect of Mughal-Deccan Relations

The material setting was further compounded by the absence of cultural affinity between the Mughals and the Sultanate kingdoms of the nature that the Mughals shared with the Rajputs. The Rajput principalities experienced a whole array of modes of enculturation and came to accept Mughal rule as legitimate, as it sought to base itself on identifiable sources of authority. Marital alliances, induction into the nobility, contact and familiarity through the mobile imperial camp were some of the instruments through which the Mughal state asserted its authority over the Rajputs, and were constant reminders of its power. Cultural affinity enabled instrumental cooperation to be transformed into

normative persuasion that infused greater predictability into their interpersonal relations. This degree of stability was never achieved with the Deccan states.

By a number of indicators, the Deccan was marginalised from the imperial processes of socialisation. For instance, the perambulations of the imperial camp did not extend to the outer reaches of the empire. The power projection capabilities of the Mughal state were confined to areas around the centre and hence, a potent mode of display of the grandeur and might of the empire could not be employed in the distant Deccan. Moreover, for the Deccan nobility the Mughal state did not offer lucrative positions within its mansabdari system. A look at the composition of the Mughal nobility would reveal the low representation of officials from the Deccan. (Gordon 1994: 205) Without the promise of interest sharing, the Deccan officials had no stakes in a system that did not cultivate and safeguard their aspirations. As the Rajput case proves, the safeguarding of interests is the preliminary stage in the development of ties of loyalty.

The interaction with the Deccan states did not develop beyond the level of tactical engagement. Excluded from the system in every sense, they failed to see a convergence of their interests with those of the Mughals. The outcome was that the two parties dealt with each other as per the dictates and contingencies of time. The lack of predictability was evident in their interpersonal relations, which was marked by shifting alliances and intermittent wars. These were indicative of an instrumental view of cooperation and hence were susceptible to changes in the fluctuating balance of power in the Deccan. A good example would be the case of Burhan who appealed to the Mughals to support his claim to the Nizamshahi throne. Despite the help Akbar extended to him which enabled him to assume the reigns of power, Burhan upon return in 1591 sought to consolidate his position with the help of the neighbouring kingdom of Khandesh rather than strengthen his ties with the Mughals. The displeasure of the Mughals at this move is evident in Fazl's observation that Burhan upon taking over Ahmadnagar,

> '...should have increased his devotion and gratitude, and been an example of obedience to other rulers in that quarter. The wine of success robbed him of his senses, and he forgot the varied favours he had received from the Shahinshah. In his evil fortune he set himself to oppress the weak, and considered that his profit consisted in the injury of others.'(*AN*, III: 909)

The rhetoric of conquest was not altogether absent from the chronicling of the Deccan operations, as Fazl justified Akbar's invasion of Ahmadnagar in terms of the pursuit of higher objectives. He wrote that the '...sole idea of Shahinshah was to clear the territory of Ahmadnagar of the weeds and rubbish of rebellion, and then to prevail over Bijapur, Golkonda and Bidar.' (*AN*, III: 1183) Despite the moral justification behind the military campaigns, uncertainty over control of the Deccan continued even after its eventual annexation to the Mughal empire. The tenuous nature of Mughal rule in the region highlights the significance of normative persuasion and legitimacy in ensuring stability and predictability in political relationships. Given the lack of cultural appeal and engagement at the level of popular discourses and belief systems by the Mughals, the Mughal state remained a distant and alien entity with which the kingdoms in the Deccan failed to identify. Thus, a conjunction of both material and ideational factors explains the costly and relatively ineffective campaigns that the Mughals had to wage in the region.

Conclusion

The contrasting case studies demonstrate the centrality of norms in facilitating or impeding the development of a dialogue between two actors. Complementarities in belief systems lay the edifice for a possible engagement between the participants, the terms and 'language' of which are mutually comprehensible and familiar. As the Rajput case study demonstrates, interests and values of actors could not only coincide but also reinforce each other. The Mughals were keen on tapping the vast military resource base of the Rajputs and absorbing the local elite into their administrative system. For the Rajputs, the opportunity meant holding lucrative high profile positions that would further enhance their status in the clan politics of Rajasthan. Relations between the Mughals and the Rajputs were cemented by the affinity in their belief systems that caused the Rajputs to relate to and internalise the hegemonic norms. Akbar's approach towards moderation, paternalism and reasoned debates provided the space for a fit between the two cultures. The Rajput notion of honourable service by evoking qualities such as loyalty enabled the alliance to evolve beyond its initial instrumental purposes. That the Rajputs regarded the Mughals as their rightful masters was evident from their normative identification of Akbar as an incarnation of a Hindu god. Offering a Rajput daughter in marriage to the

emperor was considered another gesture of submission to his authority. Such a 'thick' web of interaction that characterised Mughal-Rajput relations was missing in the case of the Deccan powers. Neither did they identify with the hegemonic norms of the Mughals nor did they regard them as their legitimate rulers once they were forced to submit. The result was an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust that made relations between the powers vulnerable to fluctuations in the alliance system. The case studies go on to highlight the power of norms and the function that socialisation plays in system maintenance. They also underline the need to explore the latent aspects of power, which remain an understudied area in international politics.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This study has perhaps thrown up more questions than answers, partly because of the limitations of research undertaken. Quite like the answers to its research questions, this work falls in the grey zone between the supposedly polar opposites of the material and the ideational, the general and the particular, theory and history. Research that 'falls between two stools' does not necessarily convey ambiguity of position, chiefly because the interstices between theories and approaches remain little researched upon. The grey zone is indeed the zone of interdisciplinarity.

This study has experimented with several permutations of disciplines and theories in an attempt to address the lacunae of ahistoricism, Eurocentrism and presentism within IR. It found that an admixture of theories, which by themselves reflected these inadequacies, offered a richer and more varied account of how power operated in different societies. For instance, while realism sets the overall context in terms of explaining why a particular actor assumes power, constructivism explains how identities are not *a priori* attributes but constructed in the process of mutual engagement among actors. Likewise, postcolonialism and the philosophy of history alert us to the need to recognise the particularities of history operating beneath the massive cycles of the dynamics of power. However, the biggest schism exists between IR and history, and unless theory learns to accommodate the element of contingency, hybrid studies would continue to fall in the interstices between disciplines.

The concluding chapter is divided into four broad sections, each of which presents the findings of this study along some of its key coordinates, namely; the enormous but understudied transformative potential of soft power, the scope for interdisciplinarity within IR, a critical appraisal of the representative images of Indian culture and history, and lastly, the possible areas for further research that could address the lacuna within culture studies literature. Based on the findings from two contrasting case studies, the first segment highlights the centrality of socialisation and normative persuasion within Akbar's accommodationist grand strategy. The second section examines the capacity for

generating interdisciplinary and cross-theoretical studies within IR, particularly on non-Western societies. The third part outlines the state of culture studies on India; critiques the enduring conventional representations of India; and calls for a historically nuanced understanding of India's strategic practice. The final segment suggests, by way of departures from conventional approaches, possible leads into understudied domains that are likely to further enrich the field of IR theory.

THE STUDY IN BRIEF

This study has looked at the 'internal' politics of geography: the manner in which the inner contours of polities shaped their response strategies; the manner in which strategic thinking evolved under conditions of endemic conflict, compelling states to institutionalise practices that enhanced order and stability in the system. This aspect of geopolitics is equally and perhaps, more important than the oft examined 'external' facet in understanding the historical processes through which strategic practice developed in India. Seen from this perspective, attempting to work backwards from the territorial consciousness that developed under the modern Indian state is fallacious, just as the exercise at extending ancient and medieval strategic traditions to the contemporary context would be unviable.

As the study demonstrates, the social context in which the Mughals came to power was one in which a monopoly over force was not possible to achieve, much less maintain. The military balance of power, which is the independent variable of this study, determines the type of grand strategy that a ruler opts for and sets the tone for policies at the highest level. For instance, the high levels of social militarisation prompted Akbar to adopt an accommodationist grand strategy. (Kolff 1990: 3) The fairly even distribution of retaliatory power meant that the Mughals could not resort to sustained coercion against their adversaries. However, beyond establishing the correlation between the existing balance of power and the chosen grand strategy, a hard-nosed realist interpretation is not very helpful in explaining the manner in which Mughal power shaped the identity of its subject elite.

I specifically argue that socialisation has a systemic function to play, in that norms are constitutive of identities and hence cast an independent impact on behaviour.

The independent effect of the ideational aspect of power is brought to the fore through the intervening variable of distance. In Mughal India, the Rajput principalities comprising the core areas around the political centre came to experience accomodationist policies of Akbar, whereas the peripheral kingdoms of the Deccan were marginalised from these co-optive strategies. Going by the results, the core areas experienced lesser incidence of warfare as a dispute settlement mechanism with the imperial power than the peripheral areas, which saw a greater occurrence of wars.

The variable of distance thus produced two variations in strategy, namely socialisation and coercion, both of which emanated from the grand strategy of accommodation. Socialisation required the hegemon to make his authority identifiable to the target elite through a complex blend of material and ideational factors, thereby eliciting its willing cooperation. As a long term strategy, it entailed an array of tactics that pre-empted the resort to force and made relations more stable, in contrast to which, a coercive strategy was far more volatile, entailing the issuance of threats and frequent military campaigns. While coercion as a strategy worked within the logic of immediacy and short term goals, it proved expensive and unsustainable in the long run.

As the first case study demonstrates, stability in Mughal-Rajput relations was facilitated to a great extent by the complimentary belief systems and military ethos that the Mughals and the Rajputs shared. (Gordon 1994: 182, 204) The Rajput tradition of honourable service to the master as the mark of loyalty served Mughal interests well. Rajput princes were offered high offices that made them participants in governance, a sophisticated strategy that had not been executed before Akbar. Their regular presence in the Mughal court also brought their domestic issues to the attention of the emperor who took keen interest in Rajput politics of succession. Moreover, the mobile imperial capital was not only an impressive mode of projecting power but it also enabled Akbar to maintain contact with local rulers. (Gommans 2002: 108; Chandra 1993: 32-33)

The second case study on the five Deccani kingdoms illustrates the working of a coercive strategy within the broad rubric of accommodation. It reveals a different set of dynamics in motion, wherein the material dimension of Mughal power was more pronounced than the ideational aspect. Unlike the Rajputs, the Deccani kingdoms based their cooperation with the Mughal state on a shifting calculus of interests rather than on

perceptions of legitimate dominance. The practices through which the Mughal emperor exercised power over the Rajputs were singularly absent in the Mughal dealings with the states in the Deccan. Measures to establish control at the periphery were restricted to bargaining tactics and did not graduate to more advanced levels of control that enculturation entailed. The lack of socialisation, evident in the limits of power projection and lucrative employment, is evident in the political fluidity and constant realignments of power equations that marked Mughal-Deccan relations.

Contextualising the Case Study

So what lessons does the Mughal case study offer for India's strategic practice? Although the Mughal period is not an era that is taken to be typically representative of Indian history by any criteria, it does throw up some interesting reflections of the country's traditions of kingship and authority. Gleaning from the specificities of the two case studies of Akbar's grand strategy undertaken in this study, certain broad conclusions can be arrived at.

Above all, Akbar's strategy reflected the overriding compulsion to indigenise his power: its sources, its ostensible representations and its actual exercise. His realisation that perceptions of legitimacy required him to 'go native' as it were in many overt ways was shared by many prominent and ambitious rulers in the past. Akbar conciously fashioned his image on the lines of the traditional Hindu king. The all-important notion of 'balance' was personified by the Hindu king, thereby locating the institution of kingship firmly within society rather than above it. The position of the king was a paradoxical one; while his intrinsic divinity was recognised, it was at the same time limited by the spiritual domain of the priest. (Heesterman 1998: 18-22) This complex status of the king continued into the medieval era without radical changes. As the third chapter explains, Akbar's image was a careful replication of the medieval Hindu king whose vital function entailed protecting the realm of norms and beliefs. The association of his persona with the sun as the source of light, his daily appearances for the benefit of the gathered public and his representation as a paternal figure and a spiritual guide to his people, were all initiatives that went on to indigenise his authority according to existing traditions.

Furthermore, his choice of accommodation reflected the innately inclusive nature of Indian identity, which did not delimit communities on either racial or religious grounds. Delimitation and exclusion, as Marie Lal argues, became the basis of India's identity during the colonial period when the search for the country's untainted essence commenced. (Lal 2006) Expansion and consolidation in a territory that was politically fragmented into kingdoms and ruled by locally entrenched elites necessarily entailed a degree of accommodation. Although some of Akbar's conciliatory tactics were in line with the policies his predecessors had pursued, his personal interest and curiosity in other religions and cultural practices went on to fashion the intensity and scope of his policies of accommodation.

This leads us to the question as to which strategic tradition would accommodation come under. Broadly speaking, Akbar's accommodationist grand strategy would come under the moralist tradition, and there are several reasons for this. For one, accommodation is based on a non-zero sum view of security, implying that the security of the state does not necessitate the extermination of the enemy. (Johnston 1995: 113) By differentiating between the enemy and the conflict situation, the policy of accommodation allows greater scope for negotiations, making the prospects of an impasse less likely. Furthermore, the moralist tradition places a high premium on ethical and moral concerns which eventually inform the conduct of war. This abiding concern with the calibrated use of force and with ethical dimensions of war-making is discernible in Akbar's conduct with not just the Rajputs whom he eventually won over, but also with the Deccani states with which cordial relations could never be established during his lifetime. The compelling preoccupation with the moral dimension, which placed a restraint on the use of unethical and insidious tactics to achieve war objectives, ensured the calibrated use of force and served to contain the escalation of the conflict. Although the resort to war was exercised after co-option had failed, remedial conciliatory measures were quickly resorted to once the outcome of the war was settled.

The Power of Ideas

Power needs to be studied in all its facets since the interlinkages among them may be many. Power may be defined primarily in materialist terms, but it is seldom exclusively

exercised as such. Ideas and perceptions have far greater pull and effectiveness in eliciting support than raw force, urging hegemons to consciously develop and enhance this particular dimension of their power. The acceptance of material preponderance need not imply the rejection of the normative dimensions of control. (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990: 289) The study does not seek to delineate the influence of ideas *outside* the influence of material resources in the form of threats and incentives. However, it would be of considerable research interest to study the extent to which ideas *reinforced* material power, although in specific instances, it is a matter of speculation if history would have taken a different, more volatile course had ideational power been neglected. The study underlines the resilience of ideas that outlast shifts in particular balance of power configurations. (Wendt 1987: 356) Not only were practices associated with Mughal legitimacy observed by the British after the downfall of the empires, but the power of ideas continue to persist in the colonial caricatures that are faithfully kept alive long after the overlay of colonialism ended.

This brings us to the issue whether the extent of stress on ideas must necessarily follow the military assertion of power after a certain stage of control is achieved. Personal attributes of leaders and the personality factor certainly go a long way in explaining why certain statesmen took greater efforts at developing their ideational resources than others. In the case of India, emperors before the Mughal dynasty had presided over relatively stable empires, and these massive political entities were not built at the total neglect of cultural and normative appeal. However, the level and scale of enculturation achieved under Akbar was a new phenomenon. (Foltz 2001: 21-25) The fact that Akbar intensified his efforts at amalgamating the local political elite can be partially explained by his personal attributes as an idealist who was interested in probing the possibility of a syncretic culture.

Ideational power thus ought to be studied in its own right. Ideas are formulated for their expediency but they also change the way people think about themselves. This, in turn fundamentally alters the bare conceptualisation of power we originally began with. With perceptions of legitimate authority entering the picture, it is no longer possible to conceive of power as an objectively measurable resource.

CONVERSATIONS: IR AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Probing commonalities and accepting theoretical likeness does not signify the absence of intellectual rigour, just as defending dogmatic positions is not a mark of committed scholarship. The discussion on the potential meeting ground between IR and other disciplines has yielded several ideas for the theorist to ponder over. Recent anthropological and sociological research on culture has witnessed a shift from the more essentialist anthropological frame of reference to the relatively flexible humanist understanding of the concept. (Reeves 2004) The change is yet to be registered within IR, which has tended to largely remain impervious to new research in other fields, maintaining its essentialist understanding of culture.

A look at the research orientation of articles in prominent journals on IR offers a fair representation of the field. Despite claims to heterogeneity in terms of published material, the focus remains confined to a limited range of subject areas such as international political economy and international organisation. The extent of isolationism that is practised within the discipline can be seen from the disciplinary background of contributors to some of the well-known journals on IR. For instance, the *International Studies Quarterly* has seldom stepped outside the ken of the disciplines of political science, international relations, economics and sociology, a trend that is reflected in the slant of other major journals as well. (Breuning *et al.* 2005:454-456)

Before conversations with other disciplines, IR first needs to begin a dialogue among its constituent theoretical schools. This study examines the potential for dialogue along two key axes involving theoretical perspectives that are widely held to be incompatible, namely between realism and postmodernism, and between realism and constructivism. Although in both these cases, realism is taken as the key referrent on account of it being the dominant theory, it is deficient in studying the constitutive and reproductive dimensions of power, particularly the impact of culture and history on the dynamics of international politics. (Farrell 1998: 416) The study has highlighted the incongruity of seeing culture and international politics as phenomena that are operative at different levels, particularly so when compared to other disciplines that see no such contradictions. Indeed, the study seeks to emphasise that the research interests of comparativists and realists are not at odds with one another. The constructivist assertion,

on the other hand, allows greater scope to human agency in the historical process, since structures and actors are seen to be mutually constitutive of each other.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need to locate supposedly 'neutral' notions within historical contexts. Concepts such as power and hegemony hold little meaning outside their socio-historical context, and to attribute contemporary connotations to these would be a fallacy. For instance, realist-constructivism sensitises the theorist towards the manner in which actors exercise 'different *forms* of power (authority, force, care, and so on) through different *expressions* (linguistic, symbolic, material, and so on) to *produce* different social realities.' (Mattern 2004: 345, emphasis original) In this regard, the philosophy of history holds important lessons for the IR theorist. The history of ideas enables the researcher to go back in time without the baggage of loaded contemporary meanings and concepts. (Skinner 2002: 89) The connotations implied by thinkers and writers of antiquity may have long since disappeared, but a historical enquiry shows the evolutionary path of a particular notion to be neither linear nor inevitable. The argument that contemporary dimensions of a given concept evolved out of very different connotations in history, offers an important corrective to IR theory which often associates concepts with a timeless and eternal quality. The tendency of IR to mine history for substantiations of our contemporary concerns also stems from such contrived linkages with the past. (Gunnell 1978: 133) This is particularly true in the case of Indian strategic culture, an area that has thrown up a clutch of colonial caricatures harking back to the ancient period.

The question that naturally emerges out of this disconcerting appraisal pertains to how history is supposed to correct the skewed picture. Building greater historical contingency into our theorisations about case studies has several ramifications. Firstly, it acts as a check against essentialist interpretations of state behaviour of the kind that are typical of many writings in culture studies today. This is where historical contingency and contextualism come into the picture when we undertake to study the impact of ideas. (Lawson 2006: 39) Not only were concepts imparted different meanings, as the history of ideas has shown us, but they also moulded identities differently.

Secondly, historical contingency allows greater room for critical perspectives to emerge and be heard within the discipline, particularly with regard to postcolonial

societies. Colonialism has left an indelible mark on the processes of state- and identity-formation in societies such as India. A contingent approach allows the researcher to problematise many of the cultural tropes that were accepted as naturalised verities. Placing them in the historical context would reveal the undercurrents of power that threw up these caricatures and the manner in which they were legitimised within the colonial discourse.

Thirdly, as Buzan asserts, a historical perspective further enables the theorist to better explain the manner in which the sovereign state system evolved out of a system of imperial orders. (Buzan 2006) The empire occupies the central position in this study, both as a theoretical concept in which the internal and the external domains overlapped, and as an empirical case study on the manner in which power and political control were constantly negotiated in history. (Barkawi and Laffey 2002: 110-113) The empire as a concept not only allows for a more historically 'deep' discipline that is representative of the political experiences of the non-Western world, but also reveals the mutually constitutive elements of what has so far been considered as formal interaction between the centre and the periphery during the nineteenth and twentieth century. (Hardt and Negri 2000: 70)

Postcolonialism has held a mirror to IR, and it has revealed a disturbing picture of an essentially conservative discipline. As the voice of the marginalised, postcolonialism does not find an easy niche in IR that it can fill, primarily because macro theories are more concerned with the dynamics of power and domination, than with the specificities of marginalisation. The field of IR abounds with theorists who claim that little has changed in power relations down history, which in all likelihood, are going to remain the same in the future. In the din of conformism, what is often lost are some of history's firsts, one of which is the unparalleled, almost universal phenomenon of colonialism.

Colonialism marked a disruption in the manner in which power was constituted and perceived, particularly in India which had a long political history prior to British rule. In terms of geographical orientation, the British power moved inward from the periphery to the centre, inverting the centuries-long outward Indian orientation of dynasties ruling from land-locked centres of power. (Schwartzberg 1992: 260) More substantially, colonialism was perhaps the first instance of power that was not indigenised, at least

officially. There is a growing body of literature that suggests how the growing engagement with the local populace blurred the lines of distinction between the coloniser and the colonised, despite the best efforts by the British to the contrary. (Barrow 2003; Colley 2002; Wilson 2004; Pennycook 1998) But the British liked to believe that their distinct status as a foreign power and a superior race was an asset to be preserved, and continued to do so till the end of their rule.

The colonial era also marked the initiation of arguably the first culture studies on India, a legacy that has been faithfully kept alive by culture specialists even today. The series of detailed colonial studies on Indian society, culture and polity under official patronage held significant implications for the way India's strategic thinking was conceptualised. The carefully constructed set of stereotypes had the effect of creating an imagined analytical tradition that gradually acquired the credence of a historical tradition. (Jeffrey 1998: 67) Structuralist theories such as realism have little space for the critical study of such elaborate imaginings that took on the dimensions of a tangible reality. Postcolonialism, with its avowed intention of uncovering the subtleties of colonial power, would be conducive to the enquiry of an interested theorist.

CULTURE STUDIES ON INDIA: RETHINKING REPRESENTATIONS

It is imperative to understand that when it comes to formulating cultural explanations of state behaviour, culture and history go together. Culture studies on India have yielded and reiterated standard orientalist caricatures. Although certain culturalists like Tanham and Rosen appear to be basing their claims of extensive historical references, this recourse to history is both selective and anecdotal. It is a classic instance of 'using' history rather than 'learning' from it, where contemporary nuances of concepts are taken back in time to demonstrate their resilience. This requires the retrospective positioning of historical events and occurrences in a manner that conveys a sense of continuity with the present. (Keene 2005: 18) Ironically, history is reduced to being both, a repeated reiteration of what already existed, and an inevitable route to the present when the cultural landscape reveals itself with unparalleled clarity. Culture then is moved out of the ambit of history- it does not owe its existence to any particular historical antecedent, predating and in that

sense, existing *outside* history itself. Culture maintains its pristine form, untarnished by countless messy historical occurrences.

More often than not, culture is assumed to be located in certain characteristics that are believed to have withstood the influence of alien cultures brought in by invading armies. Culture thus transmutes into an independent, unassailable entity that is indestructible by external forces. Such a theory presumes the existence of an indigenous people who become the living repositories of their distinct cultural heritage. Reeves emphasises the need to move 'beyond the notion that there is a place and obvious space for everything and it can all be bottled, pickled, canned and put on a shelf forever marked 'culture'.' (Reeves 2004: 85) Hence, the abiding 'human focus' of culturalists- both in the articulation of culture by notable personalities in the past, and in its presence as the 'mind-set' aiding and conditioning its people- is hardly surprising. For this very reason, studies on postcolonial societies must be overtly cultural in order to acknowledge and confront such tropes. (Pandey 1999: 8, Chowdhry and Nair 2002: 19)And they must also be genuinely historical, because to hollow out history from such studies (as these self-confessed culturalists have done) is to hollow out culture itself. (Rosen 1996: 33-34; Latham 1999: 146) Katzenstein rightly observed that he 'did not view culture as a child of deep continuities in history', and preferred instead to focus on the 'political processes by which norms are contested and contingent, politically made and unmade in history.' (Katzenstein 1996: 2) Culture here signifies not the essentialist frames of reference that become its 'markers', but the shifting norms and belief systems that inform identities in different time frames. The anti-essentialists offered an alternative reading of culture that stressed on 'processes' of identity formation than on a static identity itself. Brian Street defines culture as

> '...an active process of meaning-making and contest over definition, including its own definition. This, then, is what I mean by arguing that *Culture is a verb*. (Cited in Reeves 2004: 83, emphasis original)

Before assessing what Indian history and culture have together thrown up by way of possible leads, let me begin with what India's strategic inclination has *not* been. This pertains to a set of colonial images that have endured past their time, and carry with them enormous strategic significance. These cultural images of India, well entrenched as they

are in the popular psyche and duly reproduced in academic writings, need to be critically analysed: their colonial lineage, the motivations behind their formulation and their influence on subsequent cultural theorisations. What makes these tropes of special interest to us is the manner in which they were elaborately constructed to become authentic representations of reality. Indians came to see themselves through the representations the British had erected of them: as a passive, defensive, idealistic people incapable of strategising. Importantly, Indians came to believe in a reality that did not exist prior to, or independent of, the colonial portrayals. When knowledge is constructed in a manner that affects the construction of social reality itself (which is what reflexivity is all about), the motifs become the naturalised truth. Social reality then does not exist independent of its representations, and the subtle transformation of stylised images into actuality is complete.

Thus, any attempt at an alternative approach must begin with the onerous task of dismantling these obvious 'givens'. Although this is by no means a novel exercise, carried out as it has been with great deal of deftness and sensitivity within subaltern and postcolonial literature, it is yet to be undertaken within IR. (Pandey 1999: 9; Prakash 1994: 1; Prakash 2000: 129-130) This disconnect reflects the innate resistance within IR to open itself up to new research orientations. Constructivism, which seeks to problematise the status-quo by focussing on the reflexive loops between knowledge and social reality, creates an opening that is conducive to such a critical enquiry.

Having established the colonial constructions as an instance of reflexivity, we can get back to the task of negations we had started with. One of the popular claims put forward by strategic culturalists on India pertains to caste as a broad template informing the strategic outlook of the country. We have seen scholars such as Tanham, Rosen and Latham resorting to the caste argument to assert that India has an essentially hierarchical view of IR. It is further argued that the caste system was responsible to a great extent for a fractured Indian society that was intrinsically too weak to defend itself from foreign invasions. (Tanham 1996: 42) The trouble with a casteist interpretation is that caste as an inflexible institution is taken to be the representative trope of Indian society, which itself is driven by the search for the 'pure' quintessential Indian culture. To locate the essence of India in the caste structure is to render a reductionist and ahistorical reading of Indian culture, a tendency that culturalists in particular need to guard against.

The other prominent strain of argument discernible in many of the notable works on India's strategic culture concerns its idealist, other-worldly orientation. Culturalists argue that Indian philosophy reposes faith in the pre-determined course of fate which human agency can do little to alter. The inability to influence the course of their own lives prompts Indians to turn to 'other-worldly' pursuits such as meditation and religiosity, away from the mundane material concerns of this world. This particular argument, traceable to the colonial research in Indian history, is flawed for its distorted reading of Indian philosophy, which in fact lays stress on adherence to individual duties and responsibilities. (Inden 2006: 213-15) There are other caricatures that together contributed to the image of an effeminate Indian who lacks agency. They relate to the intransigence of caste as a collective identity and the Indian sense of cyclical time that were seen to be impeding purposeful individual action and rational judgement. Although it is not appropriate to dilate on the issue at this juncture, it would suffice to say that scholars need to approach the subject of Indian culture critically, certainly more so than the orientalists did.

Finally, given that the desire to see continuities with the past is universally common, numerous patterns tracing the ancestry of ideas show up across the world, which are evaluated for their relative worth. Thus, in the exalted Western tradition that has come to dominate the discourse on political and military thought, lesser traditions are placed in juxtaposition as partial and momentary interventions. The absence of a tradition altogether, taken as a statement of incoherence and lack of enlightened thinking, becomes lamentable. The intellectual exercise is eventually about the dynamics of power; about who dominates the discourse, who celebrates their history, and which construction becomes the archetype of a tradition. In a Eurocentric framework that has celebrated the West as the seat scholarship, it is of little surprise that thinkers and strategists from the margins do not figure.

Discerning India's Strategic Traditions: Culture Meets History

The rationale behind any study is to go beyond negations and suggest an alternative approach to the study of the subject. Indeed, repudiations are employed in the process of building a particular case, which in turn renders the entire exercise of negation

meaningful. That said, it would be appropriate at this juncture to suggest an alternative reading of India's strategic practice. The existing historical research material does not point in the direction of a single Indian strategic culture that unfolded with logical coherence over time. A more suitable and relatively flexible approach would be in terms of strategic traditions that reflected and informed inter-state relations in pre-colonial India. In strategic terms, the realist tradition that focussed on the calculated acquisition and exercise of power is juxtaposed with the moralist tradition, which stressed on the ethical dimensions of power such as peace and justice.[133] (Brekke 2006: 138) However, what can be stated in unambiguous terms is that Indians down history have known how to strategise and work around security problems in diverse ways.

While political fragmentation was widely prevalent, it would be flawed to draw a direct correlation between it and political chaos. Indeed, although ancient India was fragmented into multiple kingdoms, the hierarchy of kings under which the smaller rulers submitted to the supremacy of the more powerful one, had rendered some semblance of order to the state of political anarchy. (Inden 2006: 155) Indeed, fragmentations formed a chequered board on which Kautilya based his well-developed network of alternating relations of alliance and enmity. This goes on to underline the fact that Indians undoubtedly did strategise, and the endurance of Indian empires stands testimony to the sharp military acumen of its strategists.

Sovereignty in India was a nebulous concept that did not entail the clear demarcation of the king's political realm. Consequently, classical Indian tradition did not distinguish between the use of force in the external and the internal realms by the ruler. (Wink 1986: 15) Since theoretically, the authority of the king was universal (the king was seen as the microcosm of the entire cosmos), making a distinction between the internal and the external domains was self-limiting. The logic of the all-encompassing authority of the king extended to the use of force as well. A dualistic understanding of the use of force (of seeing internal violence as sedition and external force as war) was likewise

[133] The two traditions trace their lineage to the two conflicting notions of the state that the classical texts threw up: the *nitishastra* texts conceive of the state as a managerial, unitary and bureaucratised entity capable of attaining power (*artha*). In the alternative *smriti* conception, the basis of kingship is primarily ethical and religious (*dharma*) supported by a network of personal relationships. (Stein 1975: 81-82; Singh 1995)

absent in Indian theorisations. Thus, the strategies employed in war against external enemies were indistinguishable from those against internal opponents. (Brekke 2006: 120-121)

A long view of a country's strategic past also reveals that certain traditions were formulated on the manner in which political space was to be organised and defended. These traditions are best seen as successful and optimal responses to the challenges to state power prevalent at a particular time. Kautilya's 'circle of kings' was one such response, given the fractured political environment he wrote in. A response strategy at variance to Kautilya's calculative king focussed on the just ruler whose primary role was to maintain the rule of *dharma* on which his society was based. The two contending philosophical strains are discernible in the epics and texts down the ages, although the extent to which each succeeded in influencing the strategic practice of kings is a matter that has already been analysed in this study.

To sum up, culture transmutes and transforms in every age. To assume that a single culture operated for the whole of India and that there was no tradition of strategic thinking is a dangerous proposition. A tradition that suited the imperatives of a particular time period did not appear appropriate in another, causing it to recede behind a more astute strategy. The interplay of these response strategies is rooted in culture insofar as the language and the metaphors employed belong to a particular cultural milieu. (Hudson 1997: 28-29) The cultural tropes and practices resorted to for the legitimisation of power are resonant of a certain way of life unique to that society alone. The nature and profile of that society itself may change over time, and so would the terms in which power is conceived of and exercised. History, in that sense, permits us to conceptualise culture in dynamic terms.

As far as the argument that India lacked traditions of strategising is concerned, is it inconceivable for a country with multiple kingdoms to devise multiple means of vanquishing its opponents? At any point of time in history, the Indian subcontinent consisted of a number of local, regional and pan-Indian empires varying in scale and strength. It was but natural that each responded to military challenges in ways that suited its conditions and capacities best. Moreover, disruptions through invasions and historic battles were not unique to India, and every country that today claims a coherent strategic

tradition has undergone periods of change. To search for eternally valid rules of strategy continuing unbroken down history is to commit the fundamental fallacy of treating history as the preserve of a 'pure' and unassailable culture. Scholars such as Tanham and Rosen do precisely that- work their way backwards from the presumption that there exists a 'national' culture 'out there' that can be discovered and deciphered. Such an approach is very orientalist in its delineation of certain cultural characteristics as representative tropes and their subsequent dissection. If the cultural turn in IR has persisted with the reiterations of stereotypical images of eighteenth and nineteenth century scholarship on India, then culture studies has taken a turn for the worse indeed.

One can put forward a set of tentative assumptions on how culture may have impacted strategic thinking in India. It gradually gave rise to a consciousness of the antiquity of the country, and this awareness was reflected in myriad ways in the writings of different ages. For instance, rulers through history routinely exalted the greatness of this land, the conquest of which was seen as a feat of the mighty. It has variously been described as the land of plenty inhabited by people with pleasing countenance. The appeal had a lot to do with the fertile plains in the north and the trade routes that Indian straddled. But the association of the subcontinent with significance, enormity and achievement was an abiding subject of interest for writers in both ancient and medieval India. The consciousness assumed patriotic dimensions under the nationalists who took recourse to history to demonstrate their pride and loyalty for the country. One of the most popular motifs of that time was the 'Golden age' under the Gupta dynasty, representing the best and the finest of Hindu rule. This flavour of national pride also surfaced in the writings of Gandhi and Nehru who attributed India's greatness to its ancient civilisation, resilience and the spread of its culture to other lands. (Nehru 1946: 62)

A notable attribute of India's philosophical literature (taken to be the mainstay of its culture by strategic culturalists) is the marked paucity of treatises devoted to military affairs. If a researcher were to embark upon a search for historical military texts, she would come upon few other than the *Arthashastra*. (Lal 2003: 37) However, a more nuanced search would reveal that the extant epics and Vedic texts contain rich references to military and political affairs, strategising and war-making. That the bulk of such material is couched in ostensibly religious and sacred literature perhaps indicated the

Indian tendency to view security in more holistic terms than what a narrow frame of reference would permit. This was particularly the case with the moralist tradition rather than with the realist one, which tended to produce treatises such as the *Arthashastra* that dealt directly with state security.

Although the identification of a distinct strategic culture may be difficult in India's case, its underlying emphasis on firmly locating the state within the larger social milieu is instructive. Given below are some the key elements of India's strategic practice that have resurfaced time and again to determine its course through history.

Key Elements of India's Strategic Practice:

The prevalence of certain enduring political and social conditions has thrown up a set of identifiable characteristics of Indian strategic practice. These elements are by no means patently Indian and absent from the cultural histories of other countries, quite simply because cultures grow through the co-mingling of influences rather than in glorious isolation. However, the socio-political conditions that shaped the innate Indian proclivity towards certain strategies largely accrued from the two predominant realities that existed through much of India's history.

Political Fragmentation:

Firstly, notwithstanding the periodic existence of large empires, ancient and medieval India was characterised by chronic political fragmentation. Small kingdoms were local strongholds of power dominated by the landed elite, and survived through indigenously recruited military force. Dislodging local rulers would have entailed disturbing the existing agrarian structure and subduing the growing military labour market, two costly ventures that ambitious rulers keen on expansion were not willing to risk. (Kolff 1990: 7; Gommans 2002: 63) As a result, we see the establishment of empires through the subjugation of regional kingdoms that mostly predated and existed alongside the larger political entities. The overwhelming reality of tackling well-entrenched adversaries at several fronts had a profound influence on the evolution of strategic traditions in India. A look at both the realist and moralist tradition would reveal that a continual preoccupation with multiple actors spawned multi-faceted response strategies. Although the two

traditions differed in terms of the goals that the state was expected to pursue and the means it was to adopt in their pursuit, both approaches prescribed to the calibrated use of force. The resort to force was to be the last measure after all other options had been exhausted, and likewise references to the use of brute force at the outset of an adversarial situation is rare in ancient Indian texts belonging to both genres.

The Kautilyan tradition's preference for alliance-building through the *mandala* theory, over a total reliance on indigenous military capability reflected the imperative to initiate collaborative strategies, failing which more insidious measures were recommended. (Watson 1992: 79) Ancient India as a conglomeration of many warring kingdoms presented an ambitious ruler with a political scenario that could potentially dissipate his resources and energies through constant war-making. The most efficient response strategy emphasised on accommodation and alliance-building. Assimilation was another strategy favoured by Indians although the mode employed varied in each era. For instance, the caste system was initially a means of absorbing the outsiders into Indian society. However, as our case study suggests, assimilation under Akbar had less to do with induction into the caste system than with the overlay of a secular identity revolving around the emperor, above other primary identities one of which was caste itself.

The Social Context of Power:

Secondly, power in India was not traditionally conceived in purely political terms but was inextricably linked to ritual authority. The king was not only the head of the temporal realm, but was also seen as the microcosmic embodiment of all elements of the universe. His position was at once circumscribed and sacred, and thus the location of the Indian state within society was far more complex than its European counterpart's. The complexity yielded a commensurate emphasis on the material and the ideational dimensions of power by both strategic traditions. Thus, we find Kautilya cautioning his king against neglecting his power over symbolism that was recognised and acknowledged by his subjects.

The fact that force was seen as one of the many means available to a ruler made moderation in conflicts a common strategy. Issues of security remained recessed within

broader issues of stability and good life, which often implied that these were couched in acceptable terms. The notion of balance, whether personified in the king or implemented as a calibrated response to a conflict situation, frequently comes to the fore in Indian politics. (Inden 2006: 132-133) Although the modern Indian state conceives of its security in primarily militaristic terms, its emphasis on rhetoric and lofty ideals is perhaps the vestiges of an old tendency to soften and embellish the imperatives of security with the attainment of higher objectives.

The material conditions and the social context together created a proclivity towards seeking moderation and calibration in conflict situations. Thus, Indian grand strategies of any type, whether accommodationist, offensive or defensive, differ as they did in terms of the objectives they sought to pursue, tended at the very least to link the security of the state to the larger and loftier ends of good life, harmony and stability. At the rhetorical level, the ethical slant to security was in keeping with the image of the king as the keeper of societal values and the balancer of conflicting forces. At the operational level, the laying down of a wide array of strategies at the disposal of the state was logical, given the multifarious nature of threats to its security. While none of the prescribed measures were in any way uniquely Indian or novel, their arrangement into a taxonomy that prioritised negotiation, compromise and sedition over the resort to force is an abiding feature of India's strategic practice. This is not to tow the much-favoured culturalist line of argument that Indians are culturally programmed to exhaust options of peaceable co-existence. The claim that political fragmentation was a regressive condition in India that led to chaos can be traced to the normative appeal of the modern state for its total control over its territory. Fragmented territories with fuzzy boundaries separating domains were the norm in the ancient and medieval periods, and were as common elsewhere as they were in India.

The frequent resort to material incentives and seditious manoeuvres signified a tried and tested method that had met with greater success than any other measure had. The strategic traditions directed the king to vanquish and not annihilate his enemies, quite simply because the there were too many to engage with in the futile and costly endeavour. Instead, a political arrangement arrived at either through the issuance of threats or a convincing military victory entailed leaving the domain of the vanquished

undisturbed in return for his submission. Thus, we see the familiar picture of the king withdrawing to rule from his designated capital after extracting the assurance of recognition and submission from the local ruler. (Rudolph 87: 736) The modus operandi was in no way idealistic and politically naïve; just very practical and well-suited to the conditions ambitious kings had to deal with.

This study will probably leave many questions unanswered, particularly those pertaining to the existing status of the strategic traditions mentioned above. Tracing traditions across eras is no less hazardous than delineating the essential elements of a strategic culture down history. Traditions last because the conditions supporting them do; they change or recede when those conditions are transformed radically. The dramatic transformation in India's case came with the advent of colonialism that, but for the brief period of lingering influences following the transfer of power, marked the sundering of existing power relations among the indigenous elite. Technological advancements coupled with the colonial overlay redefined the whole notion of the empire and the manner in which it came to be administered. (Shaw 2003: 329-330) The empire was now more organised and elaborate than its ancient and medieval manifestations, and increasing regularisation in the functioning of the state apparatus implied that projecting power over distances was no longer a challenge as it had been in the past.

It is then of little surprise that the strategic traditions did not survive in any recognisable and functional form during the colonial period. The two conditions supporting their sustenance, namely the scenario of fragmented polities and the social context which invested symbolic significance to political power, underwent drastic change under colonialism. Territorial space came to gradually assume the contours of centralised control that is characteristic of a modern state. The imperatives of the colonial mission and the attendant process of bureaucratisation caused the British state to consciously distance itself from the Indian society. (Alamgir 2006: 429) Although recent research reveals the vulnerabilities and dependencies of colonialism that shaped the colonial state in ways it could not avoid, the disruption it caused in strategic affairs was far more definitive. (Hall 2000; Johnson 2003)

LOOKING AHEAD

The purpose of any study should be to go beyond being informative and indicate where it leaves the reader in terms of possible leads for further research. This is particularly so if a little-researched area is investigated. The history of India's strategic practice remains an understudied area in the true sense, despite recent research that has presented an ahistorical and static image of the country's strategic thinking. This study focuses as it does on both a historical case study on the conduct of inter-state relations and the orientalist caricatures that are reiterated in contemporary literature, leads off along several exploratory paths.

The possible synthesis between history and theory would be a fascinating area to probe, especially since substantial ground for it has already been laid. (Buzan and Little 2000; Elman and Elman 2001; Hobden and Hobson 2002; Puchala 2003) Interested researchers only need to cast a glance back at the interdisciplinary origins of IR and the subsequent evolution of historically nuanced schools of thought such as classical realism and the British Committee to realise that the recent turn to interdisciplinarity is not a new development. This is not to discount the emerging scholarship which has highlighted the historically impoverished nature of current research. At present, a researcher undertaking work in an area of no immediate topical concern finds herself working against the grain of contemporary research. Explorations into further interdisciplinary studies provide the theoretical foundation for the study of historical cases pertaining to strategic conduct under systems differently ordered than the present one. Interdisciplinary theories, by creating spaces for studies in history, generate greater theoretical acceptance and tolerance within the discipline.

Perhaps another area of related interest would be to undertake an investigation on the exercise of soft power in different historical epochs. The dimensions of soft power would diverge not only along the historical continuum, but also geographically. At any point of time, empires would have resorted to different means of projecting their power in response to their diverse socio-political conditions. Historical studies enrich theories by providing a wider template within which concepts can be studied.

This brings us to the debate on what role the IR theorist is expected to play, a question that is obviously linked to the larger issue of what function the discipline of IR

see itself as fulfilling. The turn to history does not necessarily entail tackling IR's fixation with all things contemporary. After all, a theory can refashion its premises to accommodate the vagaries of history and still continue to fix its gaze on current issues. (Hill and Beshoff 1994: 9) There is nothing wrong per se in analysing contemporary events, which are no less political or international than occurrences in history.

The trouble arises when deciphering fast-paced events becomes the sole preoccupation of the theorist who learns to arrange her research interests around one keyword: *relevance*. 'Relevance' is an elusive word, particularly when it comes to the study of international politics. It is best typified as a fast moving target that moves with time. There are innumerable instances of empirical research work that have not lasted beyond the passing of topical issues themselves. For a discipline in which bulk of the research work in books and journals is read for its topical value and rarely referred to again once it is 'past its time', it is time for introspection. Although in principle IR theory encompasses the politics of all sovereign entities down history, 'relevant' issues concerning the present have de facto come to define the subject matter of the discipline. (Nicholson 2000: 186) The grip of presentism is most evident when researche into historical cases are discouraged for their limited application to our current concerns. (Buzan and Little 2000: 2)

If the growth of other disciplines is indicative of anything, it is that for a field to evolve it must lift its gaze above the apparent and the transient and take a long view of history. Certain theories like neorealism claim to have risen above the particularities of politics, but their generalisations also rise above history. That happens when generalisation and contingency are seen to be incompatible, and the formulation of the former necessarily entails the sacrifice of the latter. When IR realises that history has more to offer than furnish evidence we pick and chose at our convenience, the discipline would evolve in the true sense. And when the theorist realises that she is not merely a policy specialist analysing the breathless pace of events, it would perhaps afford her the time to pause and reflect.

APPENDIX

DYNASTIC LINEAGES OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE AND OTHER REGIONAL POWERS

The Mughal Dynasty

Zahir al-Din Babur: 1526-30
Nasir al-Din Humanyun: 1530-56, 1540-55
Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar: 1556-1605
Nur al-Din Jahangir: 1605-27
Shah Jahan: 1627-58
Aurangzeb Alamgir: 1658-1707
Bahadur Shah I: 1707-12
Jahandar Shah: 1712
Farrukh Siyar: 1713-19
Shah Jahan II: 1719
Rafi al-Darjat: 1719
Muhammad Shah: 1719-48
Ahmad Shah: 1748-54
Aziz al-Din Alamgir: 1754-59
Ali Gawhar Shah Alam II: 1759-1806
Akbar II: 1806-37
Bahadur Shah Zafar: 1837-1858

The Bahmani Dynasty (Gulbarga and Bidar)

Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah, 1347-58
Muhammad I, 1358-75
Mujahid, 1375-8
Dawud I, 1378
Muhammad II, 1378-97
Dawad II, 1397
Tajuddin Firuz, 1397-1422
Ahmad I, 1422-36
Alauddin Ahmad II, 1436-58
Humanyun, 1458-61
Ahmad III, 1461-3
Muhammad III, 1463-82
Mahmud, 1482-1518
Ahmad IV, 1518-20
Wallyullah, 1520-6
Kalamullah, 1526-38

The Adil Shahi Dynasty (Bijapur)

Yusuf Adil Khan, 1490-1510
Ismail Adil Khan, 1510-34
Mallu Adil Khan, 1534-35
Ibrahim I, 1535-58
Ali I, 1558-80
Ibrahim II, 1580-1627

Muhammad, 1627-56
Ali II, 1656-72
Sikander, 1672-86

The Nizam Shahi Dynasty (Ahmadnagar)

Ahmad Bahri, 1496-1510
Burhan I, 1510-53
Husain I, 1553-65
Murtaza I, 1565-88
Husain II, 1588-9
Ismail, 1589-91
Burhan II, 1591-5
Bahadur, 1595-1600
Murtaza II, 1600-10
Burhan III, 1610-31
Husain III, 1631-3
Murtaza III, 1633-6

The Baridi Dynasty (Bidar)

Qasim I, -1504
Amir I, 1504-43
Ali Shah, 1543-80
Ibrahim, 1580-7
Qasim II, 1587-91
Amir II, 1591-1600
Mirza, 1600-9
Amir III, 1609-19

The Imad Shahi Dynasty (Achalpur)

Fathullah, -1510
Alauddin, 1510-30
Darya, 1530-61
Burhan, 1562-74

The Qutb Shahi Dynasty (Golconda and Hyderabad)

Sultan Quli Qutb al-Mulk, 1512-43
Jamshid, 1543-50
Ibrahim, 1550-80
Muhammad Wuli, 1580-1611
Muhammad, 1611-26
Abdullah, 1626-72
Abul Hasan, 1672-87

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